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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
With Saipan casinos back on the table, how should the issue be decided: By voters acting on a legislative initiative or by lawmakers acting on a bill?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

Gadhafi Forces
Libya's rebels appear to have hit a wall of overwhelming power from Moammar Gadhafi.

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Oldest Bird
The oldest known U.S. wild bird–a coyly conservative 60–is a new mother.

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13 Finalists
Season 10 of "American Idol" kicks into high gear with 13 finalists.

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NMI schools bag 11 golds in Chamorro competition in Guam. PAGE 5

$50M Tinian casino plan still a go

» 2 principal owners meet with acting governor on Tinian

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Bridge Investment Group LLC is pursuing its $40 million to $50 million casino and condominium project on Tinian after almost two years since halting construction at the staff housing, with two of its visiting principal owners renewing their commitment during a meeting with acting governor Eloy S. Inos on Tinian on Saturday.

"They're here to reiterate that the group is serious. ...The reasons for the delays are beyond our control and beyond the CNMI government's control."
—Phillip Mendiola-Long, executive vice president of Bridge Investment Group-CNMI

Over 100 Chinese employees of Bridge Investment's contractor left the CNMI ahead of the November 2009 federal takeover of local border control.

That's because the U.S. Department

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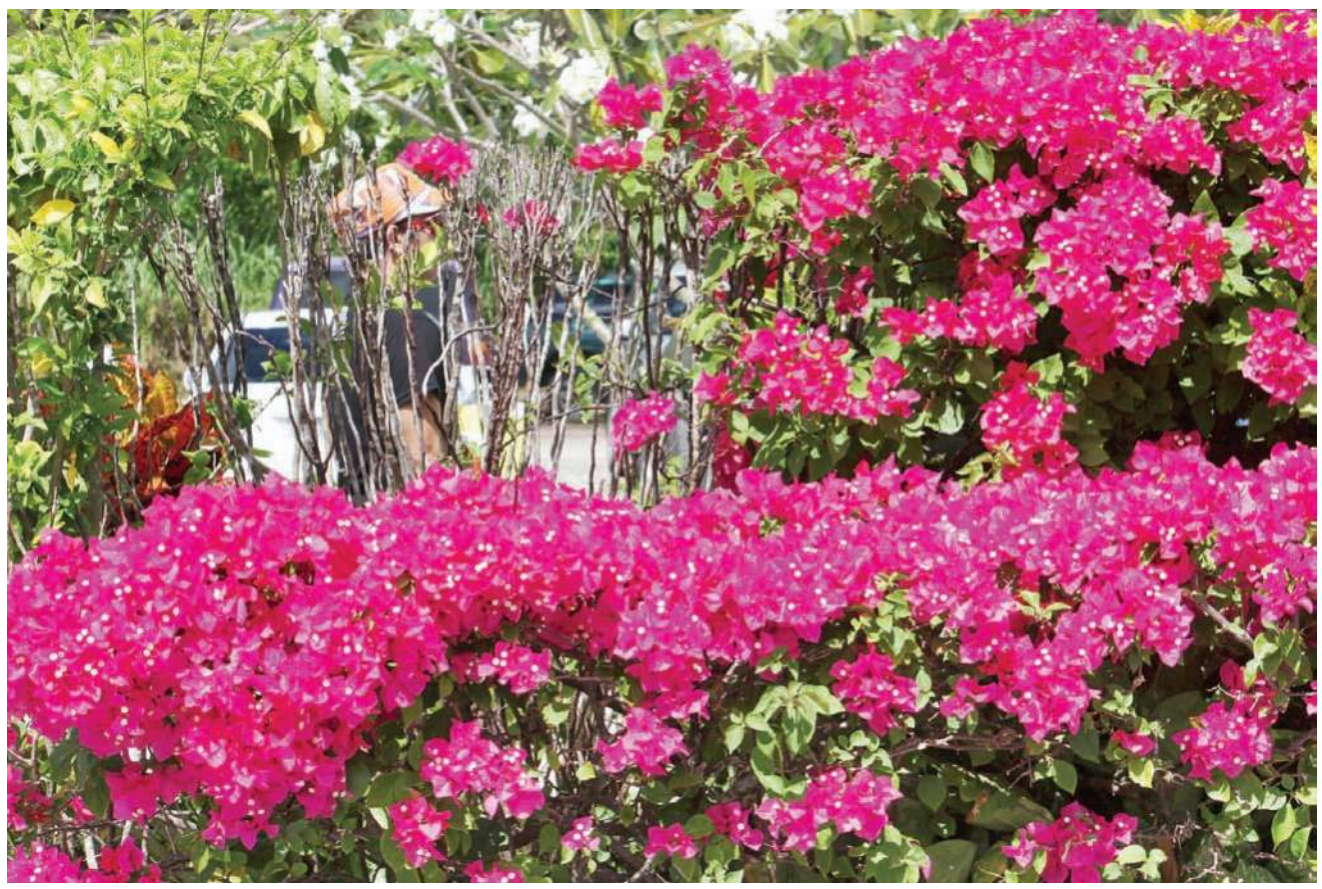

IN BLOOM
Flowers in full bloom this time of the year, just like these in front of the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe yesterday, add charm to Saipan's natural beauty that attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. However, tourist arrivals have steadily dropped in years as Japan, the CNMI's primary tourism market, and other countries also face economic hardships. January 2011 arrivals alone reached only 34,738, down by 3 percent from 35,716 in January 2010.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

TUMON BAY MUSIC FESTIVAL

Manta Ray Band bags 4 gold medals so far

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

After skipping the event last year, Saipan Southern High School's Manta Ray Band returned to Guam's Tumon Bay Music Festival this week with a vengeance, bagging four gold medals in the first four days of competition.

The CNMI's pride is not done yet; its medal tally is expected to increase as

See MANTA RAY on Page 4

Stanley questions senators' DC trip

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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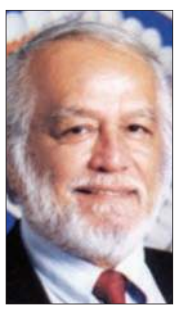
REPORTER



Torres

Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan) questioned yesterday the need to spend thousands of dollars on the airfare of four senators and one legal counsel to Washington, D.C., merely to submit a report to Congress and bring up matters that Gov. Benigno R. Fitial had already brought up with federal officials last week.

Torres, one of the CNMI's senior law-

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Local

Budget requests exceed $53.3M cap for Executive Branch

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Government agencies submitted budgets that exceed the $53.3 million ceiling for the Executive Branch. The government projects revenue to reach just $120 million in fiscal year 2012.

The Office of Management and Budget started Tuesday its budget meetings with Executive Branch agencies, which submitted their budget requests to the Fitial administration on or before Feb. 28.

Press secretary Angel Demapan said yesterday that based on these submissions, the administration found that agencies overall exceeded the limit set for the Executive Branch.

"The ongoing budget meetings by OMB are to assist departments and agencies to ensure their budget allocations are kept within the $53 million figure," he said.

The exact amount of excess had yet to be made available as of yesterday afternoon.

Vicky Villagomez, the governor's special assistant for budget and management, met with officials of the departments of Public Health, Public Safety, and Corrections on Tuesday to go over their budget requests.

Yesterday's meetings were with the departments of Public Works, Community and Cultural Affairs, and Finance.

Demapan said once the budget meetings wrap up next week, the administration will finalize its budget submission to the Legislature to meet the April 1 deadline required by the Constitution.

Acting governor Eloy S. Inos earlier said the estimated budget for fiscal year 2012 is $120 million, which is lower by $12 million than the 2011 budget of $132 million.

He said most agencies submitted proposed budgets that are 9 percent to 10 percent lower than their current budgets because of the $12 million drop in estimated budget for next year.

Inos said only a few submitted budget proposals that are higher than their current budgets, including the Public School System, which requests $36 million, up from $30 million.

Demapan said DPH also submitted a budget that's higher than its current appropriation.

He said medical referral costs continue to be a major expense.

Once the administration submits its budget to the Legislature, lawmakers will have five months to work on the budget.

If it fails to pass a budget by end-September, the government will shut down. A partial government shutdown was enforced for about nine days last year because of a budget deadlock between the House and the Senate.

DPS admin officer testifies about 'unfair' hiring, re-allocation effort

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A Department of Public Safety employee testified in Superior Court yesterday about the hiring of two police officers—Sgts. Paul T. Ogumoro and Vicente Tagabuel—that she described as unfair because they are earning more than the other sergeants.

DPS administrative officer Rose C. Dela Cruz said that Ogumoro was hired at a salary of over $35,000, while Tagabuel returned to DPS as a sergeant with the same previous salary of $30,247.

Dela Cruz took the witness stand at an evidentiary hearing in connection with Sgt. James C. Deleon Guerrero's and 25 other police officers' lawsuit against DPS for alleged discrimination in its promotion and hiring practices.

Last month, Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman said an issue of material fact still exists in the case of Ogumoro and Tagabuel, since DPS asserts that the hiring of these two complied with the competitive selection process, while Deleon Guerrero and other officers provide contrary evidence showing that Tagabuel's position was never announced, but that he was hired at Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's instructions.

At yesterday's hearing, Dela Cruz said that then DPS commissioner Rebecca Warfield had instructed her to process a request for personnel action for a position that was eventually filled by Ogumoro.

Dela Cruz said her husband, Sgt. Elden Dela Cruz, was not aware of the position.

Dela Cruz said she had expressed to Warfield her objection to Ogumoro's salary, since her husband is only getting $28,000.

She said she also pointed out that officers more qualified than Ogumoro are making lower salaries, citing the "frozen" salaries of sergeants James Guerrero, Vicente H. Sablan, Anthony Macaranas, and Tom Blas. She also gave as an example Police Officer 3 John Mendiola, who according to her, deserves to be promoted to sergeant because he has been with the department for a long time.

Dela Cruz said Warfield told her to just follow instructions because Fitial wanted to hire Ogumoro.

Ogumoro came on duty as a sergeant on July 1, 2007, she said, Sgt. Guerrero and other police officers later registered their concerns about the hiring and salary issues with her. Dela Cruz said she also got a copy of the grievance filed by Sgt. Guerrero.

In the case of Sgt. Tagabuel, Dela Cruz said that Tagabuel rejoined DPS in December 2008 from civilian work as he had left DPS as a sergeant on Dec. 29, 1999.

Dela Cruz also testified about attempts to re-allocate additional officers, like Sgt. Alfred Celis, up from a rank plus salary. Their papers, she said, were prepared but didn't go through.

She cited the case of Capt. Aniceto Ogumoro, who on orders from his brother—then acting DPS commissioner Ambrosio Ogumoro—was to be reallocated from captain to director of police, bumping up his salary from $44,000 to about $49,000 per annum.

Aniceto Ogumoro's papers went through the Office of Personnel Management, DPS, Office of Management and Budget and the Governor's Office, but was stopped at the Department of Finance for lack of funds.

These attempts to re-allocate additional officers apparently happened around October and November 2010 after Fitial issued a directive to "comply" with the Personnel Service Rules and Regulations.

On re-direct examination by attorney Robert T. Torres, counsel for Sgt. Guerrero, Dela Cruz was asked about Eloy Fitial on Tinian.

Dela Cruz said Eloy Fitial was re-allocated from a sergeant to a captain on Tinian, on papers initiated by then acting DPS commissioner Ambrosio Ogumoro with an increase in salary, but that the base salary of a captain is $42,000.

Attorney Torres told *Saipan Tribune* after the hearing that Dela Cruz's testimony was significant to the concerns that prompted the grievance filed by Sgt. Guerrero.

Torres said the case remains focused on the disparate and unfair treatment in hiring of DPS officers and salaries awarded, as well as the methods used.

"The testimony showed that the re-allocation effort to circumvent the Personnel Regulations remains a concern. The hearing continues forward," he added.

Assistant attorney general Meaghan Hassel-Shearer served as counsel for DPS.

The hearing will continue on March 30.

Checks out today for SHEFA's field-of-study scholars

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Scholars under the priority-field-of-study program of the Saipan Higher Educational Financial Assistance will start getting their checks today, according to SHEFA administrator Henry Hofschneider yesterday.

He said the checks would cover awards for the fall semester of 2010.

SHEFA earlier said that some 304 checks for priority-field-of-study program scholars remain pending at the Finance Department. These checks total $456,000.

Besides the field-of-study program, many checks for fall 2010 remain pending, including the 31 checks for grant-in-aid scholars and 265 checks for incentive scholars.

No concrete details were immediately available as to when these awards will be disbursed to beneficiaries.

Hofschneider earlier disclosed that SHEFA has held off asking the Finance Department to release the checks for its 2011 spring semester scholars until all checks for the fall 2010 semester are released. Unpaid checks for fall 2010 recipients amount to $1.027 million.

SHEFA has so far approved the applications of 328 students for the spring semester. This covers off- and on-island scholars.

It was earlier learned that SHEFA has less than a million dollars left for its spring 2011 scholars, mainly due to the $2.3 million disbursed for fall 2010 beneficiaries. SHEFA gets $3 million every year for its scholarship programs, taken from the government's collection of poker fees and licenses.

SHEFA has awarded a total of $17.7 million since the program's inception in 2004. The amount represents financial awards and grants given to its scholars as of August 2010.

SHEFA is a scholarship program that gives up to $5,000 in financial aid to Saipan and Northern Islands students pursuing college on- and off-island. Recipients are expected to return to the island so they could work in government or the private sector.

Delayed paychecks today, again

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Government employees in so-called non-critical positions will have another payless payday today, with cash collection still falling short of the $4 million needed to meet the biweekly payroll.

Press secretary Angel Demapan said yesterday that only employees in critical service positions will get their paychecks today because cash collections are just not enough.

These critical positions include doctors, nurses, police officers, firefighters, corrections officers and juvenile detention officers. Also receiving their paychecks on time are those in federally-funded positions, as well as employees at the Public School System.

A government employee on Capital Hill said yesterday she has gotten used to delayed paychecks since last year.

The employee, who has been in government for 17 years, said she just anticipates that every payday, she will not get her paycheck but has to wait for the following week.

This is at least the 11th time since June 2010 that non-critical service employees have experienced delayed payrolls.

Most of those affected by delayed payrolls are also subject to a 16-hour cut per payroll and unpaid holidays in fiscal year 2011.

7 students certified winners in Youth Congress election

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Seven individuals were elected in this year's Youth Congress elections and were certified youth senators by House Floor Leader George N. Camacho.

Nine candidates ran in last Monday's poll with seven going unopposed in their respective school districts.

Angela Faith Mamaril was the runaway winner at Grace Christian Academy with 30 votes, while Shelane Borja emerged victorious at Saipan Southern High School after getting 62 votes during Monday's poll.

At Kagman High School, Mercedes Mesa won with 24 votes; Marquina Hofschneider won for Tinian Jr./Sr. High School with 24 votes; and Audrey Joy Ada is Marianas High School's youth senator after getting 94 votes.

At Rota High School, Thomas Barcinas ruled the two-way race with 27 votes, besting Mariana Quitugua, who got 17 votes.

At Marianas Baptist Academy, Manatsu Omori won with 20 votes against opponent Jessica Im Lee, who got five.

The election results were verified by their respective school principals prior to certification yesterday. The seven students will comprise the CNMI's 13th Youth Congress leadership.

According to the Legislative Bureau, the inaugural Mass for the new members is on April 9, 6pm at the San Jose Church on Saipan, while the swearing in ceremony will be on April 16, 10am in the House of Representatives chamber.

A total of 1,126 students registered for the election; only 313 cast their votes. This translates to a 28 percent voters' turnout.

The following are the voters' turnout in seven schools: Kagman High, 24; MHS, 97; Rota High School, 46; SSHS, 67; Tinian Jr./Sr. High School, 24; GCA, 30; and MBA, 25.

Youth Congress is important

Despite the seeming lack of interest among the youth, two newly elected youth senators insist the Youth Congress serves an important function for young Commonwealth citizens.

MBA youth senator Manatsu Omori said the Youth Congress serves as the voice of young citizens.

"I believe we need to keep [the youth] involved in issues affecting them. The youth is the nation's future. If we abolish the Youth Congress, it's like ignoring the future of our young citizens," said Omori.

He vowed to focus on educational programs that would benefit the youth.

GCA youth leader Angela Mamaril, for her part, vowed to improve current laws for youths such as a ban on texting while driving.

She said the experiences of her friends who have been in the Youth Congress inspired her to try the path to become a youth leader. "I know I can bring change and impact our youths," she added.

The Youth Congress, created through PL 8-27, seeks to provide a system that allows the youth to make recommendations to lawmakers and policy-makes on youth programs.

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'Balance necessary to become optimally productive'

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

A consulting psychologist noted the importance of having balance in one's life for a person to become optimally productive.

Executive coach Charlotte Houston of the Center for Creative Leadership, an internationally based educational organization in the field of leadership development, said that to perform at an increasingly higher level, "no matter what stage we are in our lives, is possible if we achieve balance."

"In balance, we're talking about extending our reach and that reach can be extended infinitely to approach our own individual level of exquisiteness," said Houston during the Rotary Club of Saipan meeting on Tuesday at Giovanni's in Hyatt.

Houston, who is also the regional testing psychologist for the National Football League's Evaluation and Referral Management Services, enumerated factors to achieve balance at levels that continue to extend throughout one's lifetime.

Notion of self-awareness. "We need to be in touch constantly with aspects of ourselves that affect how we affect others, how we inspire others and how we lead," she said. According to Houston, self-awareness denotes not just one's own perception but also other people's feedbacks, particularly those who know us well and those we work with.

Self-management. "Self-management is what each of us does on a daily basis to stay healthy, to stay focused, to enhance our longevity, but on a day to day level, to compare health and capacity where it needs to be to do the work of service." Houston said self-management is "very important" and "very basic."

Continuous learning. Houston said every one has the need to continuously learn. "I like to think of it as a figure 8: infinite and continuous. And in order to make sure that we're continuously learning, we need to make sure we're assessing challenges on a continuous basis. We're seeking opportunities and finding ourselves, challenging ourselves with information that we would like to be exposed to on a regular, continuing basis."

Resourcefulness. "Resourcefulness comes to connectedness," said Houston, citing Rotary's regular meetings as an example. She said there are many different resources contained in our lives generally. "We need to be mindful of those and we need to nurture those connections in order to enhance our own effectiveness and longevity."

Renewal. "If all of those previous items are operating, we're needing to continually reflect on what they are and how they're present and how they're being enhanced on a continuous basis," she said, emphasizing the need to renew one's focus on the task.

CLARISSA V. DAVID

Executive coach Charlotte Houston of the Center for Creative Leadership was guest speaker at the Rotary Club of Saipan meeting on Tuesday at Giovanni's in Hyatt.

MANTA RAY

From Page 1

competitions in various musical categories are still ongoing.

In a phone interview from Guam, musical director and conductor Will DeWitt described yesterday the week-long competition as an intense and amazing experience for the 50 or so Manta Ray Band members who are competing in various categories.

As of yesterday, gold medal winners include Manta Ray Band's representatives in the solo instrument category; clarinet quartet for small ensemble category; "Pyrric Victory," which won in the rock band category; and the 43-member concert band in the high school division.

The Manta Ray Band has already been invited to the command performance ceremony where all gold medal winners will showcase their winning pieces in various categories.

DeWitt said more members are scheduled to compete in other festival categories and he is optimistic that they will bring the gold medal tally to its highest level yet. He is also confident that the Manta Ray Band will sweep the major awards in the annual competition, like it did in the past.

"So many golds have already been achieved…and more are yet to come. We had amazing rounds," DeWitt said.

Manta Ray Band's David Kim got the highest-rated performance in his solo piano performance.

Four Saipan Southern High students—leader Donovan Tudela and members Mindy Song, Elejohn Solomon, and Kanani Lee—comprise the medal-winning group in the ensemble clarinet quartet category.

Manta Band's "Pyrric Victory," which got top scores in the rock band category, is composed of leader Joshua Roberto and members Kevin Sejeren, Ken Alvarado, Jan Alcantara, and Eron Constante.

The 43-member SSHS concert band ruled the high school division, competing against other high school bands in Guam on Tuesday night and getting the highest rated performance for the category, earning them a special invitation to the command performance on Saturday night, March 12.

Standing ovation

Band club president James Camacho shared in a phone interview yesterday how the Manta Ray band thrilled the jam-packed Nikko Hotel in Guam during their performance.

"It was one of the greatest performances of our lives. Just seeing the applause and the standing ovation from the audience was really amazing and memorable. I cannot forget that moment!" he told *Saipan Tribune*.

"All our hard work paid off. We know that when you work hard, you receive an award…and this is it!" he added.

He noted that the competition level seems to be getting higher and higher each year at the Tumon Bay Music Festival.

Camacho, who has been with the school band for three years now, is graduating this year. He was part of the elite group that performed at New York City's Carnegie Hall last year.

The Manta Ray Band, the only high school musical program in the Commonwealth, has never failed its audience. The band bagged the gold medals in Tumon Bay music fests in 2007 and 2008.

In April last year, it won silver in the prestigious international music competition in New York City. The Manta Ray Band has also performed at the Sydney Opera House in Australia. In July 2012, the band is set to perform at the Olympic Games in London.

CASINO

From Page 1

of Homeland Security has excluded China from the list of countries granted a visa waiver to enter the CNMI.

Right now, visitors from Russia and China, which is also the main market for the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino, are only "paroled" into the CNMI. They are not part of the visa waiver program.

Phillip Mendiola-Long, executive vice president of Bridge Investment Group-CNMI operations, confirmed yesterday that Bridge Investment Group owners Howard Li and Eric Wang met with Inos on Saturday "to express their continued support and interest on building their project."

In a phone interview, Mendiola-Long said Bridge Investment continues to be an active investor on Tinian despite some talks that they are "not serious" about the casino project anymore.

"They're here to reiterate that the group is serious. …The reasons for the delays are beyond our control and beyond the CNMI government's control," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Press secretary Angel Demapan, when asked for comment, said the acting governor learned from the owners that they are moving forward with the casino project.

"This is welcome news for us. We're pleased to learn that they're moving forward with the project. It's the kind of large-scale investment we hope to see in the CNMI," Demapan said in a separate interview yesterday.

Demapan said Bridge Investment's construction contractor—China-based TinYuan Construction Group—is looking to hire construction workers from the Philippines and other areas besides China because of restrictions on hiring from China.

Mendiola-Long said the difficulty of hiring workers from China "leaves Bridge Investment in a very delicate position."

He said hiring workers from the Philippines is an option, but it could mean re-negotiating with TinYuan or entering into an agreement with another contractor. These options mean additional costs to Bridge Investment.

TinYuan started selling its assets in 2009 after waiting nearly a year for a notice to proceed with the project.

Mendiola-Long said even up to now, there's still no clear guidance from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on the hiring of foreign workers.

DHS has yet to issue its transitional worker regulations that will govern the employment of foreign workers at least until 2014.

Mendiola-Long said if only the U.S. government could provide a mechanism that will allow their contractor, TinYuan, to bring their workers from China to Tinian to build the project.

He said once that mechanism is in place, it would only take 18 months to build the casino and condominium project, or before 2014 when the federalization transition period ends.

Mendiola-Long said there's also a need for a passive investment visa, for the real estate market to develop.

"Most people wouldn't come to the CNMI, buy a house or condominium, and stay here for only 90 days because of immigration restrictions," he said.

Mendiola-Long also said when DHS issued its CNMI-only E2 investor rule, "it completely ignored new investors."

Ike Quichocho, acting chair of the Tinian Casino Gaming Commission, declined to comment yesterday on the Bridge Investment owners' visit at this time.

Bridge Investment had planned to build a $200 million project on Tinian, but scaled it down to $40 million to $50 million in early 2008 because of the economic crunch and uncertainties in immigration.

It secured a license to operate a casino on Tinian in 2005. The project, called Tinian Oceanview Resort and Casino, would have 396 rooms—268 condominium units and 128 hotel rooms—and 30,000 square feet of casino/banquet area based on an earlier project plan.

Bridge Investment projected to create 936 new jobs on Tinian, and this does not include hundreds more who will indirectly secure jobs on related or support businesses.

Once the casino and condominium project is completed, Bridge Investment projects $92 million in annual Tinian tourist revenue.

But it said these economic forecasts are based only on continued access to the China tourist market and any subsequent changes to the ease of access to that market will negatively impact these current projections.

Bridge Investment is the only casino investor with an existing lease with a private property owner. It has a 55-year land lease.

One other casino investor, Marianas Resort Development Corp., which plans to build a $300 million Matua Bay Resort, is leasing public land.

Public Lands Secretary Oscar Babauta said MRDC is current in its lease payments.

Another investor, Neo Gold Wings Paradise Saipan Corp., abandoned its ambitious $1 billion hotel-casino project on Tinian and owes the Department of Public Lands over $100,000 in unpaid leases and interests.

Only Tinian and Rota have legal casino operators. Saipan voters twice rejected casino operation on Saipan, but another pending bill hopes to change that.

STANLEY

From Page 1

makers, said one or two key senators would be enough to get the message across yet save the CNMI money.

Better yet, he said, the Senate could just mail or email Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan a copy of the report and let Sablan personally hand the report over to key members of Congress.

A roundtrip fare to Washington, D.C. could range from $1,500 to $2,500.

Torres said this still does not include accommodation and food.

The four senators leaving for Washington, D.C. are Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota), Senate Vice President Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian), Sen. Ralph Torres (R-Saipan), and Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian).

Senate legal counsel Matthew Meyer, who helped draft the recommendation, will be accompanying the senators who are leaving this weekend.

Torres pointed out that sophisticated communication is now available to be able to talk to members of Congress, including teleconference.

The CNMI Senate's report contains its recommendation to Congress to grant foreign workers who have been in the CNMI at least 10 years as of May 2008 a status similar to those granted to Freely Associated States citizens.

The Senate is the only CNMI government agency that has initiated public hearings on the Interior's recommendation to Congress to grant improved status to foreign workers in the CNMI.

Community members lauded the Senate for its bold move in getting the public's sentiment on the status of non-resident workers.

The chairman of the Senate committee, which initiated the public hearings on the immigration issue, said nothing beats the power of face-to-face communication, especially for an issue as sensitive as immigration status of thousands of foreign workers.

Sen. Ralph Torres, chairman of the Senate Health Committee, reiterated yesterday that the delegation will be meeting with other federal officials on a host of issues affecting the CNMI, including capital improvement project funding, health funding, and impact of federalization on the CNMI.

But Torres said the governor already brought up these same issues during his official visit to Washington, D.C. last week.

He said he himself didn't need to go to the nation's capital to formally urge Interior Secretary Ken Salazar to remove the nightingale reed warbler from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife endangered species list because it has been impeding construction and other development projects in the CNMI.

Other lawmakers and officials on Capital Hill echoed Torres' criticism of the five-man delegation to Washington, D.C. but they declined to go on record, saying that the Senate might reject their bills or appointments.

Despite the detractors' comments, senators believe that granting improved status to long-term foreign workers in the CNMI is a major issue that needs to be personally discussed with key members of Congress.

NMI schools bag 11 golds in Chamorro competition in Guam

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Public and private schools in the CNMI ruled the 8th Annual Chamorro Language Competition in Guam on Tuesday by bagging 11 of the 18 gold medals up for grabs in the contest.

Commonwealth students also went home with seven of the 18 silver medals and six of the 17 bronze medals given out during the competition.

The CNMI's medal tally totaled 24.

Guam schools won seven gold medals; 11 silver medals; and 11 bronze medals.

This year marked the eighth year of the competition, which aims to promote and enhance students' appreciation for Chamorro language and culture.

About a thousand schoolchildren from 44 schools in the CNMI and Guam participated in various categories: spelling, drawing, storytelling, children's choir, oratorical, poetry, chant, choral reading, essay, proficiency, individual male and female singing, and dramatic cultural interpretation.

Individual gold medals were awarded to:

■ Jeremiah Hofshneider of Tinian Elementary School, who topped the spelling category for kindergarten to second grade division;

■ Thomas William Benavente of Kagman Elementary School, first place in the spelling contest for third to 5th grade;

■ Keilani Barcinas of Sinapalo Elementary School on Rota, for storytelling in the third to fifth grade division;

■ Kimberly Camacho of Chacha Oceanview Junior High School, for the oratorical contest for middle schools;

■ Jeremiah Cruz of Tinian Elementary, for poetry recitation;

■ Jezreelyn Bulaklak of Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School, for essay;

■ Megan Cruz of Tinian High School, oratorical contest; and

■ Cloe Hofschneider of Tinian High School, for female singer.

Two CNMI schools were also adjudged gold winners in three categories: Grace Christian Academy on Tinian for choral reading and Tinian High School for song with dance and for dramatic cultural interpretation.

The Commonwealth's silver medalists are GTC's Breanna Camacho for storytelling; GCA-Tinian's Pamela Barcinas for oratorical; GCA-Tinian's Cecilia Fitial for poetry recitation; and GTC's Robert Marmito for essay.

Other second place winners are Rota High School's Blaine Mesngon for poetry recitation; Rota High School's Javil Manglona for female singer; and Tinian Elementary School for choral reading.

Bronze medal honors were bestowed on GTC's Alisa Gatharngeg for spelling; Kagman Elementary School's Keith Gerard Villagomez for story telling; GTC's Jezreelyn Bulaklak for oratorical; GTC's Charita Quitaro for poetry recitation; Brandee Faith Mendiola of Rota High School for oratorical; and Tinian High School's Mary Hocog for poetry recitation.

'Consistent performance'

Tinian High School sent a 33-member group to the Guam competition and bagged four gold medals in dramatic cultural interpretation, oratorical, female singer category, and song with dance category. The school also bagged two bronze medals in poetry recitation and proficiency.

THS principal Julian Hofschneider, who was still in Guam with the group yesterday, was elated with the results and lauded the performance of his students. He said many of the performances were last-minute preparations. Last year, THS went home with four golds and a bronze.

"I think all the students' hard work and dedication paid off. They're learning about commitment and what it takes to be a winner. At the same time, they're learning a lot about culture besides making a lot of friends [through this competition]," he told *Saipan Tribune* on the phone.

The THS group is expected to return to the CNMI today.

9th Circuit upholds ruling in Japanese ballplayer's lawsuit vs Marianas Resort

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has affirmed the decision of the U.S. District Court for the NMI that favored the Marianas Resort and Spa in the negligence lawsuit filed by Japanese professional baseball player Kouichi Taniguchi against the hotel over an accident.

The Ninth Circuit ruled that Taniguchi did not provide enough evidence to dispute Kan Pacific Saipan Ltd.'s lack of negligence.

"Therefore, we affirm the district court's decision granting summary judgment in favor of Kan Pacific," the Ninth Circuit judges said in their opinion issued Tuesday.

Kan Pacific Saipan Ltd. is the owner of Marianas Resort and Spa.

The Ninth Circuit also ruled that Kan Pacific was entitled to seek an award of costs even though the cost of litigation was paid by its insurer.

On award of translation costs, the Ninth Circuit said the district court acted within its discretion when it awarded costs to Kan Pacific for expenses incurred to translate relevant documents.

Taniguchi sued Kan Pacific in 2008, alleging that he was injured when the wooden deck he was standing on at Marianas Resort and Spa collapsed.

Then U.S. District Court for the NMI chief judge Alex Munson granted Kan Pacific's cross-motion for summary judgment on Dec. 22, 2008.

Munson ordered that plaintiff shall take nothing from his complaint. The judge ordered him to pay Kan Pacific costs in the amount of $7,732.30.

Taniguchi appealed to the Ninth Circuit.

Taniguchi reportedly played in Japan for the Yomiuri (Tokyo) Giants and in the U.S. for the New York Mets.

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IT&E asks for 15-yr. Rota lease extension

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Micronesian Telecommunications Corp.—which does business as IT&E—is asking for a 15-year extension on its 25-year Rota land lease expiring on March 12.

IT&E, a major telecommunications company in the CNMI, currently pays the Department of Public Lands $2,348.01 annually for the Rota lease.

The area is about 8,049 square meters in Sabana, Rota.

The original lease signed on Sept. 13, 1985, was for the construction, operation, and maintenance of transmitters and antennas for microwave radio and associated facilities.

If the 15-year extension is approved, the annual rental for the first five years will be $2,465.40, according to Public Lands Secretary Oscar M. Babauta.

Babauta wrote Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) and House Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan) on Feb. 24 to urge the Legislature to approve IT&E's request to extend its lease to 2026, citing its economic benefits.

The Legislature's approval is required for any 15-year land lease extension under Article XI of the CNMI Constitution. At least three-fourths of the 29 members of the Legislature are needed for the extension request's approval.

Babauta said DPL did not receive any disputes or concerns regarding IT&E's request when it was announced in January and February.

"The lessee presently continues to maintain and utilize the entire property. This site is an integral portion of the telecommunications system the lessee operates to provide radio and cellular services. This entails continuous contributions to the economy with gross receipt tax payments," Babauta said.

The Legislature has yet to schedule a joint session to act on lease extension request.

Babauta said the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, through the U.S. Coast Guard, proposes to co-locate with IT&E as a part of the implementation of a distress and response system, also called Rescue 21. This is an advanced search and rescue communications system critical to ensure that the Coast Guard can assist those in distress at sea.

Discrimination suit vs Saipan Ice dismissed

The federal court yesterday dismissed the discrimination lawsuit filed by a former employee of Saipan Ice & Water Co. Inc. who worked for the company for 21 years and was later terminated.

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge John Houston ordered Saipan Ice and plaintiff Carmelito Espina Espinosa to bear their own attorneys' fees and costs.

Houston said the court, however, shall retain jurisdiction of the case to enforce the settlement agreement entered into by both parties.

Espinosa and Saipan Ice earlier agreed to have the case dismissed.

The parties, through their respective lawyers, said the dismissal of the lawsuit is a compromise on a disputed claim, and that any payment made or consideration given is not to be construed as an admission of liability.

Espinosa sued Saipan Ice for alleged violation of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

He alleged that when he was terminated on May 12, 2009, he was 55 years old. He worked with the company from 1988 until his termination.

Saipan Ice earlier stated that the decision to release Espinosa from employment was due to economic reasons. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
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NOTICE OF APPLICATION
March 8, 2011

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE CRM OFFICES:

APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1. PACIFIC EAGLE ENT.	02/23/2011 SSm-2011-X-013	FILMING	SHORELINE AREAS	SHORELINE APC	APPROVED(02/22/2011)*
2. MASAHIRO YOKOYAMA	02/23/2011 SPlm-2011-X-014	DRYDOCK	ABLE CHARLIE DOCK	PORT & INDUSTRIAL APC	APPROVED(02/24/2011)*
3. GPPC, INC.	02/22/2011 SPlm-2011-X-015	ROAD PAVING	PUERTO RICO	PORT & INDUSTRIAL APC	APPROVED(02/24/2011)*
4. SAIPAN CREWBOATS	02/28/2011 SPlm-2011-X-016	DRYDOCK	BAKER DOCK	PORT & INDUSTRIAL APC	APPROVED(03/02/2011)*
5. JOHN T. SABLAN	03/07/2011 SPlm-2011-X-017	DRYDOCK	SEA PLANE RAMP	PORT & INDUSTRIAL APC	APPROVED(03/07/2011)*

Publication of the above list is in accordance with CRM Regulations, which require all permit applications to be published in a local newspaper within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the CRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the CRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APC's) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local CRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a CRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the CRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the CRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the CRM Regulations.

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Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai
Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW11-IFB-006

LAOLAO BEACH PERMEABLE PARKING AREA CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for the Laolao Beach Permeable Parking Area Construction Project, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project package will be available on or after **March 10, 2011** at DPW Technical Services Division 1353 Mednilla Avenue Capitol Hill. A non-refundable payment of Twenty Five Dollars **($25.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division.

All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce, Office of the Insurance Commissioner on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001. Preference is available to US Citizen as per Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118. Prospective bidders claiming for US Citizen preference are required to submit *P&S Form 100 (Revised 12/20/07)* with their sealed bids.

There will be a Pre-bid Conference for this project on **March 18, 2011, 9:00 a.m.** local time at the Gualo Rai Conference room. The prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the project site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **March 21, 2011** to Anthony A. Camacho Acting Director of Technical Services Division, DPW 1353 Mednilla Avenue-Capitol Hill, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

Sealed bids must be marked **"DPW11-IFB-006"**. An original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 10:00 a.m. local time, **March 22. 2011** at which time the bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be caused for rejection of the bid.

A bid bond of fifteen percent (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. This security may be Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". Surety companies must hold a certificate of authority from the U.S. Security of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 3-301. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price. Performance time for completion of the project is Ninety **(90)** calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages will be assessed at One Hundred Dollars **(US$100.00)** per calendar day for delays beyond the established completion date.

All bids documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

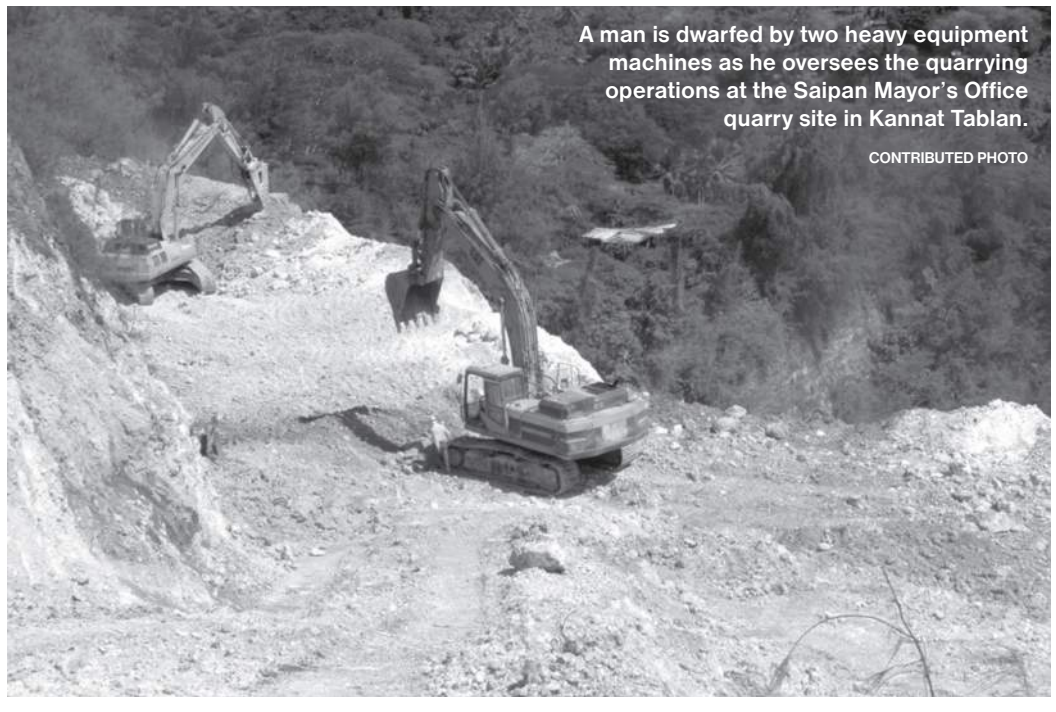
/S/ MARTIN C. SABLAN
Secretary of Public Works

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, Procurement & Supply

/S/ RITA C. DELA CRUZ
Administrator, CRM

Flores: Tap ARRA funds to pave secondary roads

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



A man is dwarfed by two heavy equipment machines as he oversees the quarrying operations at the Saipan Mayor's Office quarry site in Kannat Tablan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan Mayor Donald G. Flores wants the administration and the Legislature to tap federal stimulus funds to pay for road pavements on the island.

"I hope that the administration and the Legislature start getting down to the use of ARRA funds to pave roads. We only got so much to handle and there's still so much road to be paved," he told *Saipan Tribune*. The *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* of 2009 has provided the CNMI some $77 million to date.

Flores disclosed that the Mayor's Office, which is responsible for all secondary roads on Saipan, uses corals and other materials it obtains from its own quarry in Kannat Tabla.

According to Flores, they have enough material for a year to accommodate requests from the public to pave secondary roads as well as private roads.

Flores said that with the collaboration of Hawaiian Rock Products, the Mayor's Office gets its supply of coral materials.

"We entered into an agreement that they can have the big boulders they get from our quarry and in turn, they will assist the Mayor's Office in providing coral materials for community projects throughout the villages," said Flores, thanking Hawaiian Rock for its assistance to his office and the community.

The mayor, however, noted that the quarry "may probably run out of coral materials" in two to three years.

"For now, we have corals. So I really hope the administration will have future plans in paving these roads," he added.

According to Flores, his staff is currently working on finishing touches for secondary roads they have already paved.

Flores disclosed that by next week, his staff will start working once again on Chalan Galaide Road in Mt. Tapochau in preparation for the annual Good Friday trek to the island's highest peak on April 22.

The mayor said they will coordinate the job with the Department of Public Works.

Miah renews bid for release on bail

An auto shop owner accused of conspiring with four others in a driver's license scam is trying once more to get released on bail pending his trial.

Mohammad Jahangir Miah, through court-appointed counsel Joseph Horey, asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to release him on the same conditions that have already been imposed on his co-defendants, or on such other conditions as the court may impose.

The federal court heard the motion yesterday afternoon. The result of the hearing was not immediately available as of press time.

Horey stated in the motion that detention based solely on a finding of danger to the community is not proper under the applicable law.

Miah was arrested on Dec. 12, 2010, and has been in custody since then. He has thus far been incarcerated for 12 weeks and two days as of Tuesday, Horey said.

A detention hearing on Dec. 17, 2010, had resulted in Miah being detained pending trial, based on a court finding of a "serious risk that the defendant will endanger the safety of another person or the community."

In a supplemental order issued on Dec. 17, 2010, the court acknowledged that Miah "has no history of violence" and "is not a flight risk," yet it ordered his continued detention based solely on its finding that he "poses a risk to the public due to his criminal history," Horey said.

By "criminal history," Horey said, the court meant a history of crimes involving fraud.

He said the court denied the subsequent motion for release pending trial without a written order, the court stating only that "it's previous detention order, remains in effect.'

Miah's co-defendants are his wife Tahira Dolores Miah, William A. Hocog, Hongmei Sun, and Hui Qiang Yan.

According to the indictment, Miah and the four co-defendants conspired to illegally produce and transfer at least three driver's licenses at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to three foreign nationals in exchange for money.

In opposing previous motions to release, assistant U.S. Attorney Kirk Schuler cited Miah's previous convictions and several pending criminal cases in the Superior Court. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Women's center in the CNMI eyed

The CNMI may soon have its own women's center where women can avail of accessible training and services to educate and empower them in the community.

House Vice Speaker Felicidad Ogumoro disclosed that they are already scouting for a site for the proposed center.

"A letter has already gone to the secretary of the Department of Public Lands to help us find a location," Ogumoro told *Saipan Tribune* during the International Women's Day celebration on March 8.

According to Ogumoro, the center will have two important components: a training and educational center where women may receive training and develop their skills and a child care program to enable women who do not have access to a babysitter to attend the training.

Ogumoro said the women's center would also house administrative offices concerning women such as the Women's Affairs Office. "We want to make it a part of the center so it's not hard to manage it. Everything is in the same premises, same location," she explained.

She said the women's center will also serve as an information center where women can come in to take advantage of various programs that enhance and empower women.

Ogumoro disclosed that she will work on getting funding for the proposed women's center. "I will be ready to introduce the legislation," she said. ***(Clarissa David)***

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Guam Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo meets with Guam servicemembers at Camp Dublin in Iraq.

Bordallo returns from Mideast trip

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Guam Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo recently returned to Washington, D.C. following a seven-day fact finding mission to Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iraq, and Kuwait. The congressional delegation was led by Rep. Joe Wilson of South Carolina and also included Reps. Chris Gibson of New York, Mo Brooks of Alabama, and David Cicilline of Rhode Island.

The delegation met with Karl Eikenberry, U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan; Gen. David Petraeus, commander of International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces Afghanistan; Gen. Lloyd Austin, commanding general of U.S. Forces Iraq, and several other ranking military officials to discuss issues relating to the training and equipping of combat forces, combat operations, reconstruction efforts, and training of the Afghan and Iraqi security forces.

Bordallo also met with many servicemembers from Guam at each stop during the trip.

"I am very proud of the men and woman from Guam who are serving our nation in harm's way," said Bordallo. "During this trip, our delegation met with several ranking military officials to discuss U.S. military operations in the region and to discuss bilateral issues with our partners in the Middle East. While progress has been made to stabilize Afghanistan, there are still significant issues to address including leadership and literacy in the Afghan National Army. Further, our visit to Bahrain reiterated the importance of maintaining a presence of the 5th Fleet in this volatile region to ensure stability for democratic movements in the region and to continue battling piracy off the Horn of Africa. This trip highlighted the continued oversight that is needed in Congress to ensure that long-term economic growth and stability in the region is realized and the U.S. missions are ultimately successful." ***(PR)***

MMAC team captains' meeting today

The 2011 Marianas March Against Cancer committee will be holding a team captains meeting today, March 10, 2011, at 5:30pm, at the Hyatt Regency's Chamolinian Room.

All team captains or their representatives are encouraged to attend this important meeting where vital information will be discussed and disseminated.

"We are still actively recruiting new teams who are interested in supporting the fight against cancer. We are looking for families, businesses, schools, non-profit organizations, and government agencies who are keen on forming a team to help raise funds for the battle against cancer. We know that virtually everyone in the CNMI has been affected in one way or another by cancer so if you're interested in supporting the cause, please join us on Thursday for our meeting," said 2011 MMAC public relations committee chair Christopher A. Concepcion.

The 2011 Marianas March Against Cancer will be held on May 13-14, from 6pm to 6am, at the Hopwood Junior High School field in Chalan Piao. All are invited to attend the largest cancer fundraising event in the Northern Mariana Islands.

"All funds raised at the MMAC are spent entirely in the CNMI on cancer awareness programs, cancer patient assistance and other cancer related services. So we are also looking for sponsors who are willing to donate cash or in-kind goods to this worthy cause. All funds donated are tax deductible," said Concepcion.

For more information on the 2011 MMAC, contact overall committee chairman Dave Guerrero at 989-2496 or via email at dave.b.guerrero@gmail.com or visit www.ccamarianas.org. ***(PR)***

PACIFIC BRIEFS

French nuke tests trigger fear of atoll collapse

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—French Polynesia has urged France to study the risk of a huge wave that could be triggered by the collapse of [Maruroa atoll, the site of former French nuclear weapons testing more than 40 years ago]. In a letter to the president of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, the French Polynesian president, Gaston Tong Sang, has asked Paris to send experts to the area rapidly to assess the risks and suggest solutions. The letter says that according to a French nuclear safety official, an atoll collapse could trigger a 20-metre wave and expose people on Tureia atoll to radiation levels 300 times higher than in France. Moruroa atoll was the center French nuclear testing in the Pacific by the French government from 1966 to 1996 where more than 126 tests were conducted.

China 'Shoe King' to build factory in Port Moresby

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (The National/PIR)—A Chinese "shoe king" has decided to invest US$27 million in a shoe factory in Port Moresby. This was revealed in a joint media conference by Commerce and Industry Minister Gabriel Kapris and AUSPECT PNG Ltd chairman Wilson Xue. AUSPECT has its head office in Sydney and runs a chain of shoe stores in Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne but has its shoe factories based in mainland China. Xue said when he first came to PNG, he felt uncomfortable but after spending more time here he has fallen in love with the country.

New Caledonia eases gun restrictions

MELBOURNE, Australia (Radio Australia/PIR)—New Caledonia has introduced a new gun law that will make it easier for hunters to buy rifles. PacNews reports that people can obtain a gun license in the southwest Pacific island if they have an identity card, a hunting license and a medical certificate confirming physical and mental well-being. There is no limit on the number of firearms that an individual may buy. Previously, a firearm could only be bought after an application was approved by the French High Commission or the police, a procedure that would take several months.

Fiji military denies beating regime opponents

MELBOURNE, Australia (Radio Australia/PIR)—Fiji's military has rejected allegations its soldiers have been beating opponents of the Bainimarama regime. A former Fiji cabinet minister, Samisoni Speight Tiknoisau and an Australian citizen of Fiji origin, Apisai Tawake, are among a growing number of Fijians that have publicly stated they were beaten by uniformed soldiers in Suva recently. Commander of Fiji's Land Forces Colonel Mosese Tikoitoga says those who are making these statements have a political agenda.

Niue lawmaker suggests return of NZ aid

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (RNZI/PIR)—A politician on Niue is suggesting the island forego millions of dollars in development aid promised by New Zealand and have the money redirected to help rebuild Christchurch. New Zealand is Niue's main aid donor and provides about US$14 million a year in support. Niue is a country that is self-governing in free association with New Zealand. They hold New Zealand citizenship and have open access to enter, live and work in New Zealand.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Mar. 10, 1999

Faisao says FAS bill to go ahead

The chair of the House Federal and Foreign Relations Committee yesterday junked an appeal from the Office of the Insular Affairs to withhold action on a legislation restricting the stay of Micronesians in the CNMI, saying the government must move ahead with its plan. Rep. Melvin Faisao also assured that the pending bill is patterned after the forthcoming policy of the Immigration and Naturalization Service on the migration of citizens from the Freely Associated States which will not be applicable to the commonwealth. In a letter to House Speaker Diego T. Benavente, the representative expressed concern over a request from OIA Director Allen P. Stayman to hold off CNMI action on the measure which is set to be discussed in a public hearing on Monday.

Senate tackles CIP bill today

The Senate holds its session today after it postponed voting last week on crucial legislative proposals, including a pending measure setting aside close to $23 million for capital improvement projects that aims to stir the sluggish economy. Members will also vote on a legislative initiative seeking a referendum on a proposed five-year stay limit for guest workers in the CNMI, as well as a resolution granting powers to the Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations Committee to reopen investigation into the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission. Senate Floor leader Pete P. Reyes said they will push for passage of the CIP bill that will separate appropriation for the new prison from other projects included in the first batch of priority infrastructure of the government.

Mar. 10, 2000

MVA may cut subsidy to Garapan Street Market

The Marianas Visitors Authority must slowly remove the financial support it is giving to Garapan Street Market so that the tourism agency can concentrate on its promotional campaign. MVA Board Chair Dave M. Sablan said there is a need to review the price of concession and promote the street market more to local people amid the slowdown in the island's tourism economy. Every week, MVA spends about $2,500 to pay for expenses of r the night market held every Thursday, including rent of tents and hiring of musicians. Payment from vendors, concessionaires only amounts to $1,000 a week.

House debates on early retirement for cancer-stricken gov't workers

The House of Representatives held off shelving of a bill seeking to provide relief to government employees afflicted with cancer after two of its proponents questioned a committee report rejecting the proposal. House Bill 12-79, sponsored by Rep. Jesus T. Attao, amends existing law allowing retirement for person suffering with the disease after securing certification from at least two physicians. The legislation will give him an option to retire under the disability provisions and receive retirement benefits or to continue his employment in the government.

Mar. 10, 2003

Manglona pushes for Rota sewer project

Just like Tinian and Saipan, Rota should also be connected to an island-wide sewer facility, according to Commonwealth Utilities Corp. vice chairperson Laura Manglona. During a recent CUC board meeting, Manglona said that money should also be identified for the Rota sewer project. "As representative from Rota and also as vice chair, she was making a plea if there's anything that can be done so that some money could be put aside to make the same level of commitment for the people of Rota," said CUC spokesperson Pamela Mathis. Of the three islands, Rota remainS without a wastewater program.

CUC to fund own building project

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has decided to build and fund its own building project. "The CUC is moving forward according to the executive director with its plan to design, build, and finance its own administration building," said CUC spokesperson Pamela Mathis. The agency is now looking at three possible sites, including Lower Base, and Mathis said the CUC is working with the Marianas Public Lands Authority for the most viable site. Mathis said the CUC is also working with the Office of the Governor in finding a new bill collection office for residents living on Capitol Hill, as well as in Marpi and the Kagman areas.

CPA opposes planned development at east Rota harbor

»Rota mayor to commission feasibility study for $25M investment

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Opposing views have surfaced in the planned development at the Rota harbor after the Commonwealth Ports Authority described the idea of spending $25 million to build the east harbor "unwise and impractical."

Rota Mayor Melchor Mendiola confirmed Tuesday that both the Rota Legislative Delegation and the municipality have initially agreed to develop the east harbor side to jumpstart the island's economy by attracting more vessels and ports activities.

He said the $25 million that will be spent for the project will come from the government's 702 monies, which Rota will pay using ports revenues.

But this early, CPA executive director Edward Deleon Guerrero disagrees with the idea, saying the east harbor is not a property of CPA but that of the Department of Public Lands. At the same time, he said $25 million won't be enough for the project.

"$25 million will not get them what they want—dredging, permitting, infrastructure. When I look at the master plan for Rota, the only thing that needs to be [fixed] at the west harbor is the breakwater. We're trying to convince the mayor and the delegation that perhaps the $25 million can be used wisely to complete the west harbor instead of building another one in the east," said Deleon Guerrero.

Mayor Mendiola said Tuesday, however, that the east side has a calm bay that can accommodate small and large vessels, compared to the strong currents in the west harbor.

"My only point is, the west harbor has rough waters while the east [has a] bay, which we think is the best area for the facility," said Mendiola.

He said a request for proposals will soon be issued for engineers who will do a feasibility study on the matter.

"Upon completion of this feasibility, we can have a better picture of where it is most proper to put the investment," he added.

The mayor is counting on the benefits his island could gain from the ongoing military buildup in Guam.

"As it is now, maybe we can focus on what is the ongoing development in Guam with the military relocation. I believe that if we don't have the needed port facilities, we cannot open those opportunities," said the mayor.

According to MaryAnn Lizama, CPA seaport manager, $25 million is more than enough to fix Rota's west harbor. She said building another harbor on the east side will require a lot of authorizations and permits, especially from federal agencies.

"It has a lot of challenges and restrictions. So they should just take the $25 million and open the channels [at west harbor] for easier access to vessels," she said.

CPA confirmed that it would only cost $16 million to build the breakwater.

'Geotourism Conversations' in March

The community is cordially invited to a series of community conversations featuring Jonathan B. Tourtellot of the National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations. Tourtellot will introduce the basic principles of geotourism, share recent worldwide trends, and facilitate discussion on possible geotourism activities for the CNMI.

Geotourism is defined as tourism "that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents." In addition to promoting sustainability and conservation, geotourism emphasizes culture and history as distinctive assets of a place.

The NMI Humanities Council is a longtime supporter of cultural and historic preservation in the islands, and this latest project will provide the community with several opportunities to learn about how cultural and preservation efforts can benefit residents and tourists alike.

SAIPAN
Thursday, March 10
12:30pm, Northern Marianas College, Room D-1
Monday, March 14
10am, Pacific Islands Club Napu, Room
Tuesday, March 15
6:30pm, American Memorial Park Visitors Center Theater
TINIAN
Tuesday, March 15
9am, Tinian Public Library
ROTA
Saturday, March 12
11am, Sinapalo Elementary School

The Council's Geotourism Conversations will take place on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Businesses, government agencies, environmental NGOs, and cultural and historic institutions are invited to an open forum on Monday, March 14, at 10am at the Pacific Islands Club.

The Saipan conversations will also include a guest lecture at Northern Marianas College on Thursday, March 10, at 12:30pm, as well as a community lecture for the general public on Tuesday, March 15, at the American Memorial Park Visitors Center Theater at 6:30pm.

On Tinian, the entire community is invited to the Tinian Public Library on Tuesday, March 15, at 9am. On Rota, the community conversation will take place at Sinapalo Elementary School on Saturday, March 12, at 11am.

All events are free and open to the public. Interested participants are encouraged to contact Merced Ada at 235-4785/7 or at mada@pticom.com. More information is also available on the Council's website: www.nmihumanities.org. ***(PR)***

NMC hires new science instructor

The Northern Marianas College recently hired Florita Cabanes to teach various science disciplines at the college. The newly hired instructor started teaching during the spring 2011 semester.

"The growing interest in NMC's nursing and natural resources management programs have created a need for more science instructors," said NMC interim president Lorraine T. Cabrera. "We are very pleased to welcome another qualified instructor to the college."

"The first time I set foot in my classes at NMC I felt very excited and joyful seeing these new students welcome me," said Cabanes. "The transition was also made easier by my fellow faculty members who have been very accommodating and cheerful."

Cabanes

Before starting at NMC, Cabanes was a seventh to eleventh grade science teacher at Eucon International School for eight years. She also served as an assistant professor at the institution's college division and assisted teaching various courses including biology, earth science, teaching science, and child growth and adolescent development.

Cabanes also has extensive experience as a science educator at other institutions including Cagayan de Oro College of Nursing and Xavier University, also known as Ateneo de Cagayan of the Philippines. She has also worked as a trainer to assist those teaching science at the elementary and secondary education level.

"Before I fell in love with science, I actually struggled as a student to study and learn it," said Cabanes. "I think my previous struggles have helped me understand each student's learning needs and how to work with their unique attitudes toward learning."

Cabanes has a bachelor's degree in Biology and a master's degree in Teaching Biology from the University of San Carlos in Cebu City, Philippines. She has also passed national teaching certification examinations, the Praxis I and Praxis II in Biology Content Knowledge. ***(NMC)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP11-DEQ-060

SUBMISSION: APRIL 05, 2011 • TIME: 3:00 P.M.

"SAIPAN STORMWATER QUALITY SAMPLING AND WATERSHED BOUNDARY DELINEATION FOR THE DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY"

THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THIS PROJECT IS AVAILABLE AT THE DEQ FRONT DESK OR CAN BE RECEIVED ELECTRONICALLY BY CONTACTING THE CRM NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION COORDINATOR AT (670) 664-8305, OR BY EMAILING ***rachel.zuercher@crm.gov.mp***

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS PROJECT MAY BE FAXED TO MR. FRANK M. RABAULIMAN AT (670) 664-8540 NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, **MARCH 22, 2011.**

THIS IS A FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECT; AS SUCH, LOCAL PREFERENCE ***IS NOT AVAILABLE***, BECAUSE IT'S USE IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW GRANTING FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT.

/s/ **FRANK M. RABAULIMAN**
DIRECTOR OF DEQ

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP11-DPH-061

SUBMISSION: APRIL 05, 2010 • TIME: 2:00 P.M.

"OUTSIDE GROUND MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH"

COPIES OF THE RFP PACKAGE MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO **MR. JOHN M. TAGABUEL, ACTING DEPUTY SECRETARY OF PUBLIC HEALTH ADMINISTRATION** BY FAX TO: (670) 664-4871 OR E-MAILED TO ***divbeh1@pticom.com*** NO LATER THAN **MARCH 22, 2011 CLOSE OF BUSINESS.**

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 150118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/S/ JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION FOR BID
IFB11-CHC-049 (1-9)

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 28, 2011 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PROCUREMENT OF CNMI SNS-RSS DISASTER SUPPORT EQUIPMENTS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATION MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS IFB SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO WARREN F. VILLAGOMEZ, BIO TERRORISM PROGRAM MANAGER BY FAX TO (670) 236-8769 OR E-MAIL TO ***Warrenvillagomez@gmail.com*** NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, **MARCH 15, 2011.**

THIS IS FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECT; AS SUCH, LOCAL PREFERENCE IS NOT AVAILABLE, BECAUSE ITS USE IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW GRANTING FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT.

/s/ **JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ**
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP11-CHC-058

SUBMISSION: APRIL 06, 2011 • TIME: 2:00 P.M.

"RADIOLOGICAL SERVICES AND TENANCY FOR THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER"

COPIES OF THE RFP PACKAGE MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A PRE-BID MEETING WILL BE HELD ON **MARCH 22, 2011 AT 10:00 A.M.**, AT THE SECRETARY'S OFFICE, LOCATED AT THE DR. JOSE T. VILLAGOMEZ BUILDING, LOWER NAVY HILL. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO **MS. ESTHER L. MUNA, MHA ACTING DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION** BY FAX TO: 9670) 234-8930 OR E-MAILED TO ***esther.muna@dph.gov.mp*** NO LATER THAN **MARCH 28, 2011 CLOSE OF BUSINESS**

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ**
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

BRUCE L. MAILMAN
CNMI BAR ASSN #F0153
MAILMAN & KARA, LLC
PMB 238, Box 10,000
Saipan, MP 96950-8900
Telephone: 233-0081
Facsimile: 233-0090

ATTORNEYS FOR PLAINTIFF
LPP MORTGAGE, LTD.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

LPP MORTGAGE, LTD., Plaintiff, -v- JOSEPH A. AGULTO Defendant.	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 10-0022** **NOTICE OF SALE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court on January 6, 2011, in this matter, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth herein below, all of the right, title, and interest of defendant Joseph A. Agulto in and to the following real property located at Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands:

LOT NO. 011 G 1078, KAGMAN III, consisting of approximately 835 square meters; and which is also described as:

LOT NO. 011 G 1078, containing an area of 835 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 011 G 19, the original of which was recorded on December 9, 1993 as file no. 93-4287 at the office of the Commonwealth Recorder, Saipan.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on March 14, 2011, at the hour of 3:45 p.m., at the law offices of Mailman & Kara, LLC, 2nd Floor, Tan Marikita Bldg., Beach Road at Cpl. Derence Jack Street, Garapan, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Inspection of Property. It is the responsibility of each bidder to inspect the property prior to the sale. Failure to inspect the property or any portion thereof will not constitute ground for any claim, adjustment, or rescission by any buyer.

Warranties and Covenants. All property listed for sale in this Notice will be sold in its current condition, and at its current location. The sale will be held without any warranties or covenants whatsoever, whether express or implied, including but not limited to warranties of title, merchantability, and/or fitness for any purpose whatsoever, all of which warranties and covenants are hereby expressly disclaimed. Neither the undersigned nor the plaintiff may give any warranty or covenant, express or implied, with respect to the property listed for sale in this Notice. Neither the undersigned nor the plaintiff shall be liable for the quality of the property listed for sale in this Notice, or for any fault or defect in the description thereof. Buyers shall not be entitled to rescission, damages, or any other remedy on account thereof.

Conduct of Sale.

a. Reserve. The auction sale may be held with reserve. The reserve price on any property offered for sale may or may not be disclosed to bidders, in the sole discretion of the undersigned.

b. Rights and duties of auctioneer. Consistent with the laws, customs, and usages of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales, the undersigned shall have the following rights and duties in conducting the auction sale: (1) to withdraw the property listed for sale in this Notice before sale or before a bid for such property is accepted; (2) to adjourn the sale without notice at any time before any specific property is struck off, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and (3) to reject, on behalf of the seller, any or all bids, for any reason.

c. Bids. Bids may be submitted in advance for any or all of the property listed in this Notice. The highest of such bids will automatically be considered the opening bid for the item. Advance bids may be submitted only in writing, signed by the bidder, and delivered to the law offices of Mailman & Kara, LLC, 2nd Floor, Tan Marikita Bldg., Beach Road at Cpl. Derence Jack Street, Garapan, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The bidder assumes all risk of non-delivery, late delivery, or mis-delivery of bids. Any person, including the plaintiff, may bid in person at the auction sale, whether or not such person has submitted an advance bid.

d. Disputes. The undersigned may resubmit any property listed in this Notice if a dispute arises as to any bid thereon.

Enforcement of Auction Sale.

a. Deposit. Every successful bidder shall pay to the undersigned a deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price immediately after the sale is consummated. Payment shall be in cash or by certified check. The balance must be paid to the plaintiff, in care of Mailman & Kara, LLC, within three (3) days from the date of sale, in cash or by certified check. If the balance is not so paid, plaintiff will retain the deposit as liquidated damages, and will again offer the property for sale.

b. Memorandum of Sale. If requested by the undersigned, every successful bidder must sign a Memorandum of Sale, immediately after the sale of any property is struck off at auction.

c. Court Approval. Every sale may be subject to approval by the Court. The auctioneer makes no warranties or promises with respect to court approval of the sale, including but not limited to the time in which such approval may be granted. No delay in the granting of court approval shall be ground for any claim, adjustment, or rescission by any successful bidder. The successful bidder will be promptly notified if and when court approval is sought, and if and when it is granted.

Change of Terms and Conditions. The undersigned and the plaintiff reserve the right to change any of the terms hereof by announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause, shall be binding on all bidders by constructive notice.

DATED, this 21st day of January, 2011:

RONNIE D. HODGES, Auctioneer

BRUCE L. MAILMAN
CNMI BAR ASSN #F0153
MAILMAN & KARA, LLC
PMB 238, Box 10,000
Saipan, MP 96950-8900
Telephone: 233-0081
Facsimile: 233-0090

ATTORNEYS FOR PLAINTIFF
LPP MORTGAGE, LTD.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

LPP MORTGAGE, LTD., Plaintiff, -v- MARIANO TEDIL ALDAN, aka MARINO TEDIL ALDAN, Defendant	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 09-0350** **FIRST AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court on December 13, 2010, in this matter, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth herein below, all of the right, title, and interest of defendant Mariano Tedil Aldan aka Marino Tedil Aldan in and to the following real property located at Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands:

LOT 010 K 121, containing an area of 991 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 010 K 01 dated August 19, 1987, Commonwealth Recorder's File No. 87-2911 dated August 19, 1987.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on March 14, 2011, at the hour of 4:00 p.m., at the law offices of Mailman & Kara, LLC, 2nd Floor, Tan Marikita Bldg., Beach Road at Cpl. Derence Jack Street, Garapan, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Inspection of Property. It is the responsibility of each bidder to inspect the property prior to the sale. Failure to inspect the property or any portion thereof will not constitute ground for any claim, adjustment, or rescission by any buyer.

Warranties and Covenants. All property listed for sale in this Notice will be sold in its current condition, and at its current location. The sale will be held without any warranties or covenants whatsoever, whether express or implied, including but not limited to warranties of title, merchantability, and/or fitness for any purpose whatsoever, all of which warranties and covenants are hereby expressly disclaimed. Neither the undersigned nor the plaintiff may give any warranty or covenant, express or implied, with respect to the property listed for sale in this Notice. Neither the undersigned nor the plaintiff shall be liable for the quality of the property listed for sale in this Notice, or for any fault or defect in the description thereof. Buyers shall not be entitled to rescission, damages, or any other remedy on account thereof.

Conduct of Sale.

a. Reserve. The auction sale may be held with reserve. The reserve price on any property offered for sale may or may not be disclosed to bidders, in the sole discretion of the undersigned.

b. Rights and duties of auctioneer. Consistent with the laws, customs, and usages of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales, the undersigned shall have the following rights and duties in conducting the auction sale: (1) to withdraw the property listed for sale in this Notice before sale or before a bid for such property is accepted; (2) to adjourn the sale without notice at any time before any specific property is struck off, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and (3) to reject, on behalf of the seller, any or all bids, for any reason.

c. Bids. Bids may be submitted in advance for any or all of the property listed in this Notice. The highest of such bids will automatically be considered the opening bid for the item. Advance bids may be submitted only in writing, signed by the bidder, and delivered to the law offices of Mailman & Kara, LLC, 2nd Floor, Tan Marikita Bldg., Beach Road at Cpl. Derence Jack Street, Garapan, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The bidder assumes all risk of non-delivery, late delivery, or mis-delivery of bids. Any person, including the plaintiff, may bid in person at the auction sale, whether or not such person has submitted an advance bid.

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Enforcement of Auction Sale.

a. Deposit. Every successful bidder shall pay to the undersigned a deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price immediately after the sale is consummated. Payment shall be in cash or by certified check. The balance must be paid to the plaintiff, in care of Mailman & Kara, LLC, within three (3) days from the date of sale, in cash or by certified check. If the balance is not so paid, plaintiff will retain the deposit as liquidated damages, and will again offer the property for sale.

b. Memorandum of Sale. If requested by the undersigned, every successful bidder must sign a Memorandum of Sale, immediately after the sale of any property is struck off at auction.

c. Court Approval. Every sale may be subject to approval by the Court. The auctioneer makes no warranties or promises with respect to court approval of the sale, including but not limited to the time in which such approval may be granted. No delay in the granting of court approval shall be ground for any claim, adjustment, or rescission by any successful bidder. The successful bidder will be promptly notified if and when court approval is sought, and if and when it is granted.

Change of Terms and Conditions. The undersigned and the plaintiff reserve the right to change any of the terms hereof by announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause, shall be binding on all bidders by constructive notice.

DATED, this 21st day of February, 2011:

RONNIE D. HODGES, Auctioneer

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

THOSE WHO SAY THERE'S UNREST IN LIBYA ARE IN A STATE OF DENIAL!
GADHAFI
THOSE WHO SAY THERE'S VIOLENCE ARE IN A STATE OF DELUSION!
THOSE WHO SAY THIS IS A "CIVIL WAR" ARE IN A STATE OF INSANITY!
THE PROPER TERM IS "THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES"!
KEVIN SIERS CHARLOTTE OBSERVER ©2011

The high cost of oil

By MICHAEL J. GRAETZ
Los Angeles Times

Michael J. Graetz is a professor of law at Columbia Law School and the author of the forthcoming The End of Energy: The Unmaking of America's Environment, Security, and Independence. *He wrote this for the* Los Angeles Times.

The spread of popular revolt in the Middle East to Libya has exacerbated a spike in oil prices and gasoline costs at the pump. In turn, this has stimulated widespread complaints about the lack of a coherent U.S. foreign policy toward despots in the region. This is not the first time this has happened.

More than four decades ago, a military coup, led by a 27-year-old Moammar Gadhafi, overthrew Libya's ineffectual King Idris and expelled all American and British troops from their large Libyan airbases. The new regime demanded a substantial increase in the price of Libyan oil—at a time when Libya supplied about 30 percent of Europe's oil.

Following Gadhafi's lead, Abu Dhabi, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia soon sought higher prices for their oil. But the price increases didn't satisfy Gadhafi or the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries for long. The nations of OPEC demanded "equity participation" in the oil companies. This was a turning point as the oil-producing nations established control over the oil in their lands. The Arab embargo of October 1973 soon thereafter made it unmistakable that control over Middle East oil production had shifted from U.S. and European oil companies—which for decades had controlled both output and prices—to the nations in whose lands the oil was located.

President Nixon had a clear foreign policy response to this. The United States turned to our Cold War allies Saudi Arabia and Iran for support, in spite of their autocratic nature. Washington provided them with military aid and encouraged economic interdependence, hoping that in exchange the countries would serve as the Middle East's "two pillars" of anti-Soviet stability and free-flowing oil. Needless to say, that plan failed miserably.

The Iranian "pillar" collapsed a few years later in an anti-American Islamic revolution. And even though Saudi Arabia and the other Arab states of the Persian Gulf have nominally remained U.S. allies, they, not we, hold the key strings in the relationship. The United States continues to support and aid these regimes despite their authoritarianism. If the sheiks of the Persian Gulf decide to put down popular unrest with the same fervor Libya has, the hands of U.S. foreign policy almost certainly will be tied.

The problem, however, is not that the United States has had the wrong foreign policy. The problem lies in the failures of U.S. domestic policies. For 40 years, we have

See HIGH on Next Page

Growth and development

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Tribune

Vergara is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune*'s Opinion Section.*

China's Premier Wen Jiabao reported on the work of the government at the opening meeting of the National People's Congress. He stated: "Readjusting income distribution is a pressing task at present, and an endeavor to be pursued in a longer term."

Disparity of wealth was not a feature of Red China. Shanghai, Beijing, and Guangzhou have wide wealth gaps but Shanghai learned from its foreign quarters' practices, Beijing is imperial town, and Guangzhou a primal trading port. The rest of China is egalitarian.

Or so, we thought. Shenyang prides itself as China's No. 5 city, an industrial center without the wild gyrations of fortune that is often the fate of larger urban centers. Huanggu district is in the northwest quadrant of this old Manchu town, hardly known for gated neighborhoods and the ostentatious display of wealth associated with the *nouveau riche*. We resided in the neighborhood last November and we wrote of the proletarian lifestyle of its residents as we watched communal gatherings at its parks and nodes even as the cold winds of winter and more than the dusting of snow mercilessly encroached.

We returned this week to retrieve a few items we left in storage with a former Saipan resident. That's when we ran into a woman alighting from a brand new Mercedes Benz SUV with a nicely groomed Pekinese dog, bejeweled and bedecked in fineries that would have come only from a boutique store, the value of which is easily more than my whole year's salary!

At Shenyang Aerospace University, students arrived this week to claim and clean their dormitory spaces. A pile of bagged trash accumulated in front of the foreign students' apartments and I watched very early Friday morning a cleaning lady look around if anyone was watching and quickly shoved a pair of worn boots she retrieved from the pile into one of her bags, wandering off to her cart like a Chicago bag lady.

The dramatic disparity between the SUV lady and the cleaning lady bears a wide cleavage, a difference we previously characterized as the moral contradiction of our time, locally and around the world: the 15 percent of humanity owning and utilizing 85 percent of the world's wealth, while the 85 percent of the population fighting over the leftover from under the feast table.

We dabble in macroeconomics this semester, a pseudo-science that pictures the "beach rather than the sand, stones and shells." The language used is that of economic growth (currency allocation and the quantifiable difference of input versus output within a business cycle) and its aggregate measures (econometrics) that give the discipline a semblance of scientific method.

Growth is by numbers. China is now the No. 2 largest economy in the world. Does that explain the lady with the dog and the scavenging one with the boots? No. That's a qualitative assessment that usually goes with the term "development."

On Saipan, the highway that starts at Isa Drive to Papago is being widened and cemented. The amount of funds expended is chalked up as growth in the economy because capital that was not there before (materials, equipment, and labor) is input into the project, tallied and reported, and labeled a part of the island's economic growth.

Is it development? Not immediately to the discomforted residents, or to the land tenant whose farm value appreciated and will now have to rent at a higher rate. Speculative property development follows—mostly speculative—and home loans guaranteed by federal funds will be availed. Past loans show a high percentage of defaults. Growth is quantity that economists use to extrapolate quality. There lies the magical rub. President Wen's comment is a realization that the numeric ascendancy of China's economy is nothing unless the disparity between the dog lady and the bag lady is dealt with.

The same holds true for the CNMI. The distance between Kagman and CK is more than just miles. We often lament the decline of CNMI economic growth since the garment industry's sunny days turned dark, but no one seems brave enough to say the obvious: We did not have economic development. We exploited the unwary and enriched a few who took their money and spent/invested it elsewhere. We do know that economic growth accelerated the incidence of crime, phenomenally increased the population, displaced or marginalized the indigenes, and showed that corruption has no cultural bias.

Development is economics where people matter (someone said that in the '70s). Britain's PM David Cameron just announced that his government's budget is the most business growth budget ever in the isles' history. But is it development?

Government deals with economic growth, budget, and investment increase; it hardly bothers with development. That's the private and civil sector's job. If we continue to insist that education is training for the skills to make a living, preparing people to land a job, rather than the art of living a life, celebrating the joy and wholeness of existence, we stand no chance. The bean counters will prevail, and why not? We pay them well!

"Readjusting income distribution is a pressing task at present, and an endeavor to be pursued in a longer term," Wen said. Indeed, on the "pressing," but can China afford the "long term"? Can anyone?

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Tapping the power of your mind

"The dullest pencil is better than the sharpest memory."
—Mark Twain

By RIK VILLEGAS
Special to the Tribune

Rik is a writer, life-long learner, and business instructor at Northern Marianas College. He can be contacted at RikVillegas@gmail.com, and you can comment on this article at http://rikv.blogspot.com.

I've written previous articles about the incredible ability of your mind to accomplish practically anything you want. The more that scientists study the brain and its capability, the more amazing it appears. When you combine the power of your mind with a simple tool, it has the potential to exponentially increase your performance and productivity. I've been using this tool on and off for almost 40 years, and I've recently rediscovered how powerful it can be when properly used.

The tool I'm talking about is writing in your journal on a regular basis. When I was a teenager in high school, I recorded my thoughts and daily activities in pads of paper. I don't know why, it was just a habit that I started and consistently kept up. Later on, I started using my journal to record impressions and ideas I wanted to preserve for later. When I talked to someone or read an article that would get me thinking about a good idea, I would put the articles or written ideas into notebooks. This expanded into filling dozens of three-ring notebooks that were organized by the various topics. Some of the ideas materialized into action steps that made money or improved the life of my family.

There isn't an area in your life that will not improve with better and more frequent thinking. As you take the time to ponder your current situation, you will find ideas and solutions coming to your mind. It is important to quickly record those thoughts when you have them, and keeping a journal or notebook with you at all times will allow you to do it. Our mind is constantly thinking, and if you don't write a thought down when you have it, then it will fade into the distance as other things grab your attention. Carrying a notebook to capture your ideas will prove over time to be a powerful practice.

So, a journal is not just for recording your daily activities. It has many other uses to better your life and make you more productive. Here are some other ways you can put your journal to full use:

Reflective thinking. If you're working on some goals, it helps to reflect on your progress towards them and make notes about what is working and what changes you might need to make. You can reflect on the quality of your important relationships, your overall health, your career or business growth. When you put it in writing, you can later review your thoughts to find gems of wisdom that can be put into action.

Brainstorming. You can do this alone, or with several people. After discussing a topic, there will be a lot of good ideas that emerge. It is critical that you summarize those ideas and glean the best ones for further research. When you meet again, you can review your notes and share what additional ideas you had since the last meeting.

Accountability. Too many meeting are dismissed with no one tasked to accomplish things before the next meeting. If you summarize the key points and assign individuals to follow-through on important points, then the next meeting will be more productive. If you work for yourself, it is especially important to hold yourself accountable to complete important tasks. I do this by putting boxes on the left side of the page with a statement describing what needs to be accomplished. When it is completed, I check the box off. If it is not completed, I try to find valid reasons for my digression so I won't make the same mistakes again.

Recognizing patterns. We are creatures of habit, and as you record your actions and activities, you may notice positive or negative patterns of behavior. When you identify a negative behavior pattern, you should write it down and determine ways to stop it. You should leverage you positive patterns to get the most from what you do.

Becoming more sensitive to others. This is a touchy-feely point that can improve the social and emotional quality of your life. When you write about something, buried feelings can sometimes surface. When they do, it's important to recognize them and determine how it impacts the quality of your life right now. As you come up with ideas and solutions you can act upon, it will help improve your relationships. Something as simple as writing a note, making a call, or emailing your thoughts and feelings can demonstrate that you care.

There are many other ways you can use your journal to get more done and improve your life and circumstance. If you get stuck about what to write, here are 7 Ps that can help get your started: 1) **Personal** things in your life that are important to you; 2) **People** you deal with and your relationship with them; 3) **Pleasure**—the hobbies, interests, and activities that keep you motivated; 4) **Projects** you're working on right now and their status; 5) **Performance**—record the progress you're making toward your goals; 6) **Profits**—this can be ways you can either make more money or save money in your job or business; and 7) **Perspective**—take a step back and review what is going on with your life overall to determine if you're happy and fulfilled.

Get started today by getting a journal or a good notebook that you can use to start recording your ideas, thoughts, and impressions. Try it for a few weeks and you'll notice the difference it makes in your life. Do it for a few months and you'll notice the difference it makes in your productivity and performance.

Letters to the Editor

Casinos vs Article XII

I told you so (maybe even my critics will now be convinced)! They are back just like I said with the casino and they truly intend to shove it down our throats, like I predicted over several years ago. I also told voters a long time ago that Diego Benavente was a special politician because he would always invoke the right of people to decide on issues that have the potential to change the entire dynamics of life in the CNMI and he has remained true to form. Thank you so much Rep. Benavente for being a politician of the people who still knows and realizes the importance of our government being a government of, for and by the people on this casino nonsense.

What gets me is that the people of the CNMI have said no to casino investors on Saipan so many times I have lost count. It reminds me of a child begging for something that the parents know is not good for them and I'm sure most parents don't give in and neither should we, especially when there are already two casinos in the CNMI. Why can't these investors help build the casino industry on Tinian and Rota if they want a casino so bad?

The bigger question is, why can't our leaders come up with something other than casinos? The ruling party, administration, group or whatever seems to only want a casino. It is a true sign of ignorance about economics to say only a casino can help us, a true sign of betrayal and contempt for our leaders create a law to try and go against a decision the people have already made more than once, and it is a genuine violation of the administration's fiduciary duties by failing to seek other means of reviving our economy.

I believe that fixing Article XII offers the best option for immediate economic recovery in the CNMI—not casinos. I said a very long time ago that the people of the CNMI were sitting on a gold mind but nobody in charge wanted to do the work. Well, things haven't changed, which is why we are still on the casino idea of investors and not ideas of our own. Article XII is just one example of how we can jumpstart our economy and there are more but nobody is doing the homework to get it done even though it is looking us in the face. I won't go into all the positive effects of allowing every U.S. citizen to own land and allowing locals to sell to any U. S. citizen, which is their right, by the way. But I will say that Article XII, if fixed or changed properly, can do more and make life better in the CNMI than any casino and the principles of economics will support this as fact. But instead of taking on the challenge and fixing Article XII, our leaders are not leading and playing the "safe politics" that I keep warning voters about so they can get re-elected again to do nothing but watch from the sidelines.

Of all the politicians in the Legislature, only one is leading and speaking up for the people on the casino. Now we need one or the same one to have the fortitude and commitment to the CNMI to lead in our obvious need to fix Article XII. Fixing Article XII is a real solution to jumpstarting our economy and the effects will be felt almost immediately—but who and when will the work get done is the question that needs answering quick and fast!

I'm offering Article XII as a solution to jumpstarting our economy because if you are going to complain about a problem, especially publicly, at the very least you should also have a solution. Fixing Article XII is a much better solution than casinos, especially when it can help our economy and solve the social and legal challenge of equality for every U.S. citizen in the CNMI. I shouldn't have to tell anyone what will happen if we don't fix the problem with Article XII because we should already know that more federal intervention will be imminent for violating the rights of American citizens to own property in America!

FYI on Capital Hill, we the people have said no, no, and no to casinos and we are still waiting for you to recognize the agreement in the Covenant to address Article XII in 2011 so please don't let me have to say I told you so again. Our best option for immediate economic relief from within the CNMI is to start fixing Article XII and trash the casino idea like the people have already told you. Don't be like the hard-headed youth that wants and keeps begging for something we all know is bad. We can literally kill two birds with one stone (our economy and land use) by fixing Article XII.

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman, Saipan

A vacation gone wrong

I was on Saipan March 5-9 with the USS *Chancellorsville*. I had a wonderful time until March 8 at 6pm, when someone broke into my rental car at PauPau Beach and stole my backpack and my wallet. A woman saw two men in a green pickup truck with a white stripe on the bed parked next to my car that looked suspicious, and when she walked by the car again 15 minutes later, they were gone and my stuff had been stolen. If you have any information about the truck, please contact DPS and let them know. I hate to leave Saipan with this negative experience, especially since I know that almost all the people on Saipan are wonderful, welcoming people. Please help me out. Perhaps if enough people get caught, there will be less theft on Saipan.

Jeremy Bowman
via email

HIGH

From Page 10

had no effective response to what eight presidents—from Nixon to Barack Obama—have called our addiction to oil. The fundamental problem, of course, is that notwithstanding all the laws Congress has enacted since the oil embargo of 1973, we have still not solved the nation's energy problems.

The fundamental difficulties that brought energy into the policy forefront then remain unabated. The United States has 4 percent of the world's population, but we consume 25 percent of the world's oil. Today, we import more than 50 percent of our oil, compared with 35 percent in 1973, the year the Arab oil embargo shocked consumers at the pump.

Our domestic energy policies have failed us. Although we have succeeded in eliminating oil from electricity production (reducing oil-based electricity generation from 17 percent in 1973 to less than 1 percent today), this has come at the cost of substantially increasing our reliance on dirty coal-fired electricity, boosting our carbon emissions considerably.

Likewise, automobile fuel efficiency standards have reduced somewhat U.S. oil consumption, but in an unnecessarily costly manner, and they do nothing to reduce the miles we drive. Economists have estimated that a gasoline tax of just 25 cents a gallon would have saved as much oil as these fuel efficiency standards at one-third the cost to the economy.

We have also decreased our oil imports by creating a heavily subsidized ethanol industry that now supplies about 7 percent of the fuel our automobiles burn. The costs of this wasteful pork-barrel program, however, have substantially outweighed its benefits, except to the corn farmers and ethanol refiners for whom it has been a bonanza.

Decades after the Arab oil embargo, we accept instability and even war in the Middle East as inevitable. We take it for granted that we will pay the costs in lives and treasure. And although we know that high gasoline prices change people's behavior, Congress refuses to impose taxes that would raise petroleum prices, even though it could devise a way to return all of the revenues from such taxes to the American people based on their household size or level of income. As a result, our growing oil consumption and our reliance on imports continue.

The president recently described Libya's oppression of popular unrest as unacceptable. It is. But so is our longstanding failure to address our inadequate domestic policies concerning oil.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°

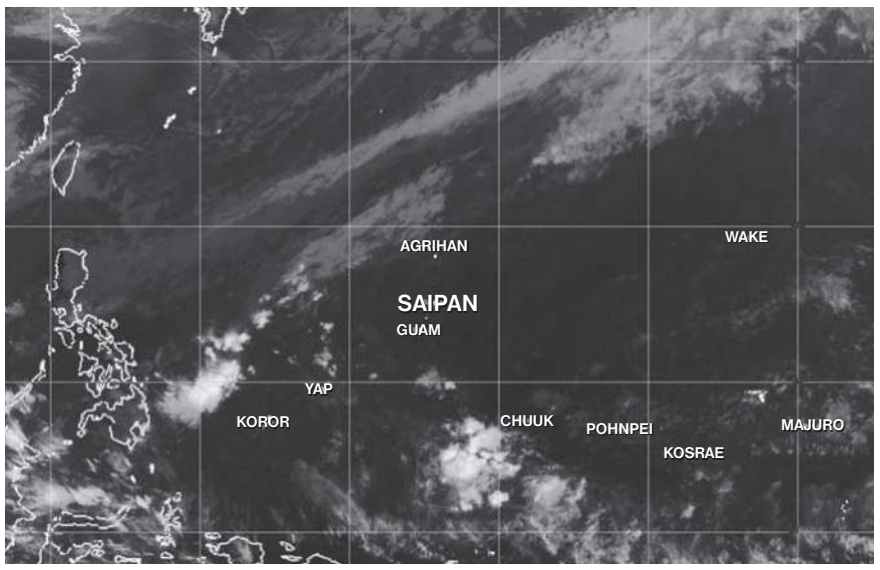
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thundershowers	▲85	▼77
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼77
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲90	▼77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼78
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼77
Kosrae	Showers	▲86	▼77
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲83	▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲70	▼62
Beijing	Sunny	▲60	▼32
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	▲68	▼62
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲82	▼71
London	Partly Cloudy	▲48	▼38
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲71	▼52
Manila	Thundershowers	▲85	▼74
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲82	▼56
Miami	Thundershowers	▲81	▼55
New York	Rain	▲51	▼47
Osaka	Showers	▲50	▼38
Paris	Partly Cloudy	▲51	▼38
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲53	▼38
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲59	▼41
Salem	Rain	▲51	▼41
San Francisco	Showers	▲60	▼48
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲46	▼30
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲54	▼37
Washington, DC	Thunderstorms	▲59	▼41

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2011
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front northwest of the CNMI extends southwestward from 25N146E to beyond 130E at 16N. Patchy clouds and rain are found along and up to 200 miles northwest of this front. A shear line southeast of and parallel to the cold front extends southwestward from 25N156E to 15N135E. Patchy clouds and rain are found along and up to 300 miles northwest of this boundary. A surface trough west of Koror extends northeastward from 7N130E to 15N136E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found within 100 miles of the trough. Another surface trough south of Chuuk extends northwestward from 1N155E to 8N147E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found within an area bounded by a line from 7N147E to 7N150E to 2N156E to 2N146E back to 7N147E. Trade-wind convergence is producing widely-scattered showers across Kwajalein and Majuro between 5N and 10N from 166E to 175E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

4:38 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.9 Feet
10:14 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
5:21 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
11:51 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.5 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:29 AM	6:26 PM
Friday	6:28 AM	6:26 PM
Saturday	6:27 AM	6:27 PM
Sunday	6:27 AM	6:27 PM
Monday	6:26 AM	6:27 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	9:31 AM	10:42 PM
Friday	10:16 AM	11:35 PM
Saturday	11:06 AM	
Sunday	11:59 AM	12:28 AM
Monday	12:56 PM	1:22 AM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 16, 2010

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	7:55am	8:45am	3, 6
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C09601	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09603	3:05pm	3:55pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:10am	8:45am	Daily
DL285	6:40am	9:15am	1, 3, ,4, 5, 6
DL297	4:35pm	7:15pm	Daily

SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX)

OZ119	4:00am	6:40am	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via KIX

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

CA988	3:15am	6:55am	1, 5 Dec 13, 17, 20, 24 & 27 only

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ606/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
C09317/891	4:25am	9:45am	3, 6 via GUM
DL285/173	6:40am	10:15pm	1, 3, 4, 5, 6 via NRT
C09313/933	7:55am	9:25pm	3 via GUM
C09313/893	7:55am	11:00pm	3 via GUM-Palau
C09603/933	3:05pm	9:25pm	5 via GUM
C09603/893	3:05pm	11:00pm	5 via GUM-Palau
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7 ICN
OZ604/715	3:20pm	11:30pm	7
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:30pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ606/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
C09603/909	3:05pm	10:25pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/723	3:20pm	10:35pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ604/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
C09596	6:35am	7:25am	3, 6
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C09602	1:40pm	2:30pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:25am	3:05pm	Daily
DL286	7:45pm	12:20am+1	2, 3, ,4 ,5, 7
DL288	8:00pm	12:30am+1	Daily

OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN

OZ120	9:50am	2:20am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:10pm	2:20am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via KIX
OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

CA987	6:40pm	1:55am+1	4, 7 Dec 12, 16, 19, 23 & 26 only

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ716/603	12:30am	2:20pm	4, 6 via ICN
DL172/286	8:05am	12:20am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C0890/9606	10:55am	8:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	1:10pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C09596	10:15pm	7:25am+1	6 via GUM
PR110/C09596	10:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 2, 4, 7 via GUM
C0892/9596	10:25pm	7:25am+1	3 via GUM-Palau
C0892/9596	10:25pm	7:50am+1	5 via GUM-Palau
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 2, 7 via GUM
C0934/9596	11:25pm	7:50am+1	4 via GUM
C0934/9596	11:59pm	7:25am+1	3 via GUM
C0934/9596	11:59pm	7:50am+1	5 via GUM

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/603	12:30am	2:20pm	2 ,4 ,6, 7 via ICN
OZ750/603	1:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
C0910/9596	11:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5 via GUM

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; CA: Air China
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

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  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
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  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam–Rota			
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily
Rota–Saipan			
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily
Guam–Rota			
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily
Rota–Saipan	17:50	18:20	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily
Rota–Guam	10:20	10:45	Daily
Saipan–Rota			
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily
Rota–Guam			
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily
Saipan–Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40	11:50	Daily
FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Tinian–Saipan			
FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily

Business

Beyond Libya, oil market warily eyes Saudi Arabia

NEW YORK (AP)—Beyond the crisis in Libya, what's driving up oil prices is concern about Saudi Arabia.

The world's largest oil exporter is dipping into its excess reserves to make up for lost exports from Libya, where a rebel uprising has largely shut down production. And the Saudis are clamping down on similar, yet smaller, protests at home.

That unnerves energy markets because Saudi Arabia's ability to ramp up production, known as spare capacity, serves a cushion, both real and psychological, when world supplies tighten. And if civil unrest—or an act of terrorism—were to disrupt the kingdom's oil output, the price of crude would likely surge well above today's prices.

Oil futures fell Tuesday as OPEC ministers, including Saudi Arabia's Ali Naimi, discussed an increase in production. The benchmark in the U.S., West Texas Intermediate crude for April delivery, fell 42 cents to settle at $105.02 per barrel. Brent crude dropped $1.98 to settle at $113.06 per barrel on the ICE Futures exchange in London.

Goldman Sachs estimated that OPEC's spare production has dropped by about 1 million barrels per day in the past three months. Part of that is Libya and part is increased world demand. The concern is the cartel won't be able to keep prices in check if another conflict disrupts world supplies, analyst David Greely said.

Greely expects WTI and Brent to both hold above $100 per barrel during the next 12 months. Oil prices have jumped about $20 per barrel since mid-February when the Libyan uprising escalated.

With the entire region in upheaval, it would be a mistake to think the Saudis have shielded themselves from the anger that ousted leaders in Egypt and Tunisia, said Barclays analyst Helima Croft. Demonstrations in neighboring Bahrain have oil traders fearing the unrest could spill across the border. The rebellions in North Africa and the Middle East have taken the world by surprise, forcing a fundamental realignment of the region's political power.

More than 17,000 Saudis have signed up on a Facebook page calling for a "Day of Rage" on Friday, according to Barclays Capital. That's despite King Abdulla's recent announcement of a $36 billion program for employment, housing and education.

"You could say, they're rich, Abdulla's popular, no problem," Croft said. But anything is possible. "If anyone had asked us in January whether (Egypt's) Hosni Mubarak would be gone, most of us would have said 'absolutely not.'"

Analyst and oil trader Stephen Schork said the market is waiting for a sign that the entire region is headed toward a peaceful outcome that will keep crude exports flowing. "That's months away," he said.

Libya produced 1.6 million oil barrels per day before fighting forced companies to evacuate workers. Most of that production is shut down.

Ali Naimi, the Saudi oil minister, said the kingdom has about 3.5 million barrels per day of spare capacity that could be brought online.

"Saudi Arabia will continue to reliably meet the world's petroleum needs," minister Ali Naimi said.

Ford CEO Mulally gets $56.5M in stock award

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP)—Ford Motor Co.'s top two executives received nearly $100 million worth of stock for their performance during 2009 and 2010, years in which the company's profits and stock price surged.

The awards, disclosed in regulatory filings late Monday, are considered excessive by some Ford assembly line workers. But Wall Street may not see it that way. Ford's stock price rose 3 percent on Tuesday.

CEO Alan Mulally, credited with propelling the company from staggering losses a few years ago to profits of $2.7 billion in 2009 and $6.6 billion last year, received stock valued at $56.5 million before taxes.

The man who hired Mulally, Executive Chairman Bill Ford Jr., got stock worth $42.4 million, according to paperwork filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

Salaries and other compensation were not listed and will be revealed later this year.

The Dearborn, Michigan, company was in financial peril late in 2006 when Bill Ford removed himself as CEO and hired Mulally away from Boeing Co. Ford Motor Co. lost $12.6 billion that year.

Under Mulally, the company mortgaged assets including its blue oval logo to borrow more than $23 billion, allowing it to weather the recession. It avoided filing for bankruptcy or following General Motors Co. and Chrysler Group LLC in taking government aid.

Ford sold or shuttered five of its seven brands, closed or sold a quarter of its plants and cut its global work force by more than a third. It plowed the savings back into well-received new vehicles such as the Ford Fusion sedan and Ford Edge.

Mulally also improved reliability and shifted Ford's model lineup from trucks and SUVs to smaller vehicles in case higher gasoline prices changed what car buyers wanted. Sales rose 20 percent last year.

Joe Phillippi, president of New Jersey-based AutoTrends Consulting LLC and a former Wall Street analyst, said the stock awards are not out of line given Ford's turnaround.

"They made a lot of money for a lot of people," he said.

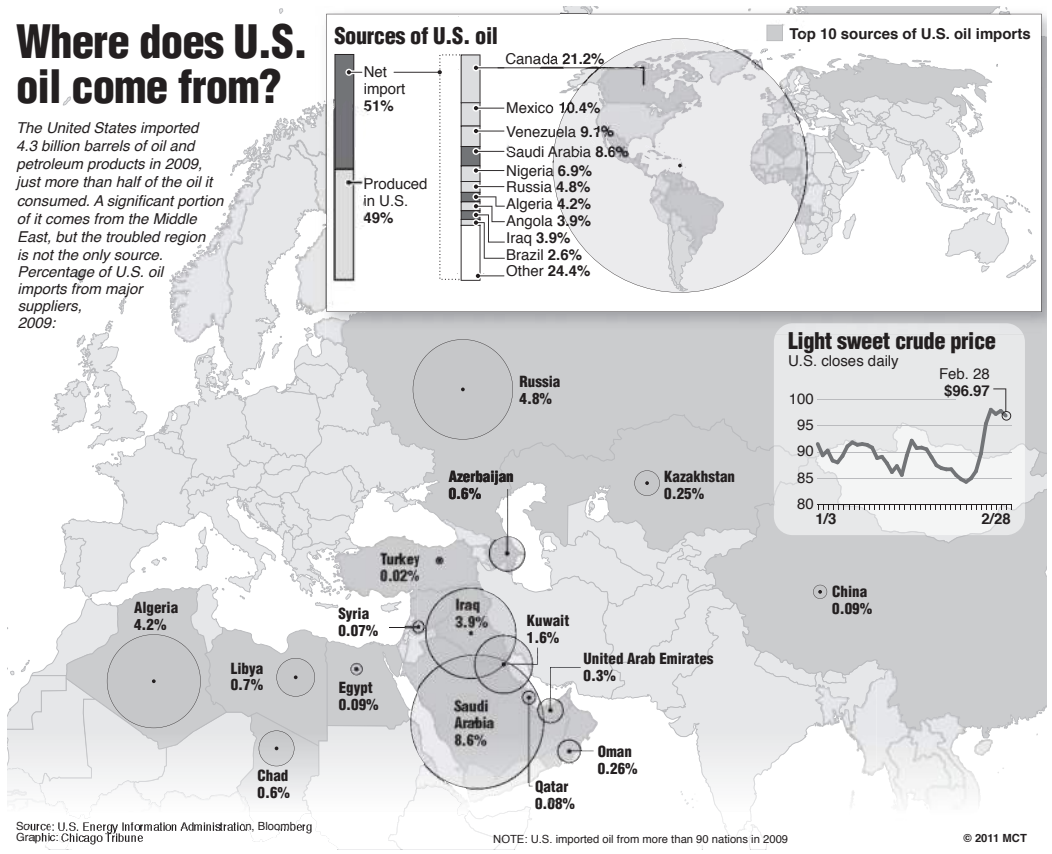
Mulally, he said, was the catalyst for Ford's comeback. "He deserves a tremendous amount of credit."

But the stock awards won't sit well with some of Ford's 40,000 U.S. assembly line workers.

Gary Walkowicz, a Ford worker in Dearborn, said it's another reason workers must demand to get back benefits and wages they gave up to help the company when it struggled.

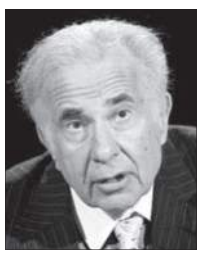
"They can't claim poverty," he said of Ford. "The concessions we gave up have given them abnormally high profits considering the economy is in a down period."

Since 2005, the union gave up cost of living pay raises, changed inefficient work rules and agreed to take responsibility for retiree health care with a trust mostly funded by Ford. But the factory workers this month will receive $5,000 profit-sharing checks from the company, the first such checks since 1999.



Billionaire Carl Icahn returns $1.76B to investors

NEW YORK (AP)—On the eve of the bull market's second anniversary, billionaire investor Carl Icahn had an unsettling message for his investors: Take your money back. Icahn told investors in his hedge funds that he didn't want to be responsible to them for "another possible market crisis," especially given the rapid increases over the past two years. Stocks have nearly doubled since hitting 12-year lows on March 9, 2009.


Icahn

Icahn, who has built a fortune from taking stakes in well-known companies and then pressing for changes, also said he was concerned about the economic outlook and political tensions in the Middle East. Icahn's targets over the years have included Yahoo Inc., RJR Nabisco and Revlon.

"While we are not forecasting renewed market dislocation, this possibility cannot be dismissed," Icahn said in a letter to his limited partners. The letter was dated Monday and disclosed in a regulatory filing Tuesday.

Outside investors make up just 25 percent, or $1.76 billion, of the $7 billion in assets Icahn oversees. Despite losses in 2008, the funds have had returns of 106.9 percent since their inception in 2004. In the first two months of the year the funds have returned 8.7 percent.

Not everyone believes Icahn is returning his investors' money because he's bearish about the markets.

Jack Ablin, chief investment officer at Harris Private Bank, said Icahn is likely trying to avoid regulatory scrutiny. Under new laws, hedge funds have to register with the Securities and Exchange Commission and allow the agency to inspect them.

"Why submit yourself to regulatory scrutiny when you don't have to?" asked Ablin. "But I think if he had spelled it out that way, it wouldn't have gone over too well."

Icahn is known as a corporate raider with a personal fortune estimated by Forbes to be worth $11 billion, mostly from forcing changes at companies in which he invests.

"When you have that kind of money, why bother with limited partners? Most hedge fund managers dream of managing just their own money," said Michael R. Levin, who writes the blog The Activist Investor.

In his letter, Icahn said he was bothered by the losses the funds incurred in 2008 and the fact that many of the investors withdrew large amounts of cash at the time.

For the kind of activism that Icahn is involved in, it didn't help that investors were pulling their money out. Activist investors operate in some ways like private-equity funds, said Damien Park, managing partner at Hedge Fund Solutions, which advises investors and companies on shareholder activism.

Park said that such flight of capital hurts their longer term strategies since they need to have ample capital on hand to manage an activist campaign, which can run as long as two or three years.

By allowing his investors to cash out, Icahn is back to relying on his own funds.

"At the end of this, he will still manage a sizable fund and he is still Carl Icahn," says Park.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Warner Bros. to offer movie rentals on Facebook

NEW YORK (AP)—Movie rentals are coming to Facebook. Warner Bros. says it is testing a service that will offer select movies for purchase or rental through the public pages of these movies on the world's largest online social network. Starting Tuesday, Facebook users who visit the official page of "Batman: The Dark Knight" can click a "watch" icon and pay 30 Facebook credits, or $3, to watch the movie. The movie is streamed through a Facebook application. Renters have access to a movie for 48 hours and can replay it as many times as they like. Warner Bros. said it will add other movies in coming months but did not say what those would be.

Starbucks' new logo debuts on cups, cafes

SEATTLE (AP)—Starbucks customers saw something new Tuesday when they sipped their coffee. The Seattle-based company rolled out its new words-free logo Tuesday on all its cups. Signs also changed at a handful of stores, and the new logo will show up on more storefronts in the future. The Associated Press first reported in January that Starbucks was updating its logo and would introduce it this month in conjunction with its 40-year anniversary.

Banker defends work on Tribune Co. restructuring

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP)—An investment banker hired by Tribune Co. to help end its 27-month stint in bankruptcy protection defended the integrity of his work Tuesday as testimony began over dueling reorganization plans. David Kurtz, a managing director for Lazard Ltd., was the first witness in a two-week hearing that could decide the fate of the media conglomerate. U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Kevin Carey must decide whether to approve Tribune Co.'s proposed reorganization plan, a competing plan submitted by dissident bondholders, or neither.

Nation

Wis. gov. proposes union compromise in e-mails

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker has offered to keep certain collective bargaining rights in place for state workers in a proposed compromise aimed at ending a nearly three-week standoff with absent Senate Democrats, according to e-mails released Tuesday by his office.

The e-mails, some dated as recently as Sunday, show a softened stance in Walker's talks with the 14 Democrats who fled to Illinois to block a vote on his original proposal that would strip nearly all collective bargaining rights for public workers and force concessions amounting to an average 8 percent pay cut.

Under the compromise floated by Walker and detailed in the e-mails, workers would be able to continue bargaining over their salaries with no limit, a change from his original plan that banned negotiated salary increases beyond inflation. He also proposed compromises allowing collective bargaining to stay in place on mandatory overtime, performance bonuses, hazardous duty pay and classroom size for teachers.

AP

Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker addresses the media regarding a letter received from Sen. Mark Miller, D- Monona, on Monday, March 7, 2011 in Madison, Wis.

The increased contributions for health insurance and pension, which would save the state $330 million by mid-2013, would remain. The unions and Democrats have agreed to those concessions to help balance a projected $3.6 billion budget shortfall.

Sen. Bob Jauch, one of the 14 AWOL Democrats, said he hoped the compromise would serve as a blueprint for future negotiations. But he and Sen. Tim Cullen, who were both working with Walker's administration, said the latest offer was inadequate.

The e-mails show that Jauch had wanted even more items to be subject to bargaining that Walker seeks to eliminate, including sick leave and vacation pay.

"I consider the lines of communication still open," Cullen said Tuesday. "Whether there's going to be any communicating, remains to be seen. These things ebb and flow."

Walker has repeatedly said that he would not budge on the key parts of the bill that's been stymied in the Senate after Democrats left 19 days ago. Since then, the pressure to deal has increased as protests reached as large as 80,000 people, polls show the public want a compromise and recall efforts were launched against 16 senators, including eight Republicans.

Some of the items in Walker's compromise plan could only be bargained if both sides agree to take them up. Workplace safety would be subjected to bargaining regardless.

Walker also proposed allowing collective bargaining agreements to last up to two years, instead of the one-year limit in his original proposal. Unions would only have to vote to remain in existence every three years, instead of annually as Walker initially proposed.

Additionally, University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics Authority employees would not lose all union bargaining rights and the Legislature's budget committee would have to vote to approve any changes to Medicaid programs sought by Walker's administration. Under the original bill, the Department of Health Services could make cuts and other changes to programs benefiting the poor, elderly and disabled without requiring a hearing or vote by the legislative committee.

Senate Republicans spent hours going over the compromise plan Tuesday morning in a closed-door meeting, Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald said. He acknowledged that pressure was increasing on the senators, saying the recall efforts launched against eight Republicans was "on everybody's minds."

"Everybody's obviously receiving a lot of pressure," Fitzgerald said. "I had people on my front porch before I left this morning."

He didn't say whether Senate Republicans agreed with the concessions Walker proposed on Sunday said support for the underlying bill remained strong.

"Were rock solid, we're fine," he said.

Freshman Democrat upbraids Obama on spending

WASHINGTON (AP)—A freshman Democratic senator accused President Barack Obama on Tuesday of failing to provide leadership on a worsening national deficit as top Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill spent more time pointing fingers than seeking common ground on a must-do measure to fund the government for the next six months.

Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., called on Obama to lead "tough negotiations" on wrapping up last year's unfinished budget work and said that "right now, that is not happening."

"When it comes to an issue of significant national importance, the president must lead," Manchin said. The freshman senator faces re-election next year in a state where voters are generally hostile to Obama.

White House press secretary Jay Carney countered by saying that Obama's "leadership and seriousness about the need to live within our means, cut spending where we can is quite clear."

Manchin

At the Capitol, the top Democratic leader continued his assault on the House-passed spending measure, which contains bruising cuts to many domestic programs. A vote looms on the GOP-drafted legislation, as well as a Democratic alternative, in the Senate later this week

Republicans say the Democratic plan, which would cut domestic agency operating budgets by about 3 percent relative to last year, doesn't go nearly far enough as the GOP plan, which cuts agencies by about 13 percent on average—cuts that would feel twice as deep because they would be implemented over the second half of the budget year ending Sept. 30.

"We have to get off the number game," said Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., who called the GOP bill "a destructive piece of legislation." Reid suggested cutting farm programs and exploration subsidies for oil companies as ways to bridge the gap.

Looming in the Senate Wednesday afternoon are test votes on the House GOP plan and the milder alternative from Senate Democrats, designed to prod the Obama administration, Republicans dominating the House and the Democratic-led Senate to settle gaping differences.

Democrats say the votes in the Senate would demonstrate to tea party-backed House GOP freshmen that their bill is a dead issue in the Senate and that they need to move closer to their demands for smaller budget cuts.

Neither measure can muster the 60 votes required under Senate procedures to advance; not a single Democrat is likely to vote for the GOP measure, and some may shy away from the Democratic bill as well.

NPR exec blasts tea party in hidden-camera video

WASHINGTON (AP)—A National Public Radio executive was captured on hidden camera calling the tea party movement racist and xenophobic and said NPR would be better off without federal funding, in an embarrassment likely to fuel the latest round of conservative attacks on public broadcasting.

The video was posted Tuesday by James O'Keefe, the same activist whose undercover videos have targeted other groups opposed by conservatives, like the community organizing group ACORN and Planned Parenthood.

It drew swift reaction from Republicans in Congress, who are renewing efforts to cut funding to public broadcasters. NPR and PBS have long been targets of conservatives who claim their programming has a left-wing bias. Similar efforts in the 1990s and 2005 were not successful, although public broadcasters take the threat seriously.

National Public Radio said in a statement that it was "appalled" by the comments from Ron Schiller, the president of NPR's fundraising arm and a senior vice president for development.

Schiller informed NPR that he was resigning from his position before the video was shot, NPR spokeswoman Dana Davis Rehm said Tuesday. He was expected to depart in May, but has now been placed on administrative leave.

O'Keefe, best known for hidden-camera videos that embarrassed the community-organizing group ACORN, posted the video Tuesday on his website, Project Veritas. The group said the video was shot on Feb. 22.

"We've just exposed the true hearts and minds of NPR and their executives," O'Keefe said in a letter posted on the site. He asked supporters to sign a petition urging Congress to review NPR's funding.

"This disturbing video makes it clear that taxpayer dollars should no longer be appropriated to NPR," House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Va., said in a statement. He added that executives have "finally admitted that they do not need taxpayer dollars to survive."

The budget bill passed by the House last month would end funding the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which supports programs distributed on NPR and PBS. CPB is getting $430 million in the current fiscal year.

Attacks by conservatives on NPR gained momentum last year when analyst Juan Williams was fired for saying on Fox News that he feels uncomfortable when he sees people in "Muslim garb" on airplanes. Schiller defends the Williams firing in the video.

ACROSS THE NATION

Suspect killed in St. Louis wanted on drug charge

ST. LOUIS (AP)—A federal marshal was shot in the head and two other law enforcement agents were wounded Tuesday after a suspect they were trying to arrest on assault and drug charges opened fire. Authorities fired back, killing the man. The marshal shot in the head was listed in critical condition at a hospital as family members flocked to his bedside. His mother was flying to St. Louis from the Southwest, Mayor Francis Slay said. Another marshal was shot in an ankle, while a bullet grazed a police officer's face, sending him toppling down stairs in the two-story home during the violent confrontation shortly before 7 a.m.

Mass fish death fouls California marina

REDONDO BEACH, Calif. (AP)—An estimated one million fish turned up dead Tuesday in a Southern California marina, creating a floating feast for pelicans, gulls and other sea life and a stinky mess for harbor authorities. The sardines apparently depleted the water of oxygen and suffocated after getting lost in the marina, officials said. "All indications are it's a naturally occurring event," said Andrew Hughan, a California Fish and Game spokesman at the scene. The die-off was unusual but not unprecedented.

'Bigfoot' suit: NH is stomping on civil liberties

CONCORD, N.H. (AP)—First there was a Bigfoot sighting. Now, there's a Bigfoot suing. A performance artist and amateur filmmaker who dressed as the mythical beast says New Hampshire park rangers didn't have the right to kick him off a mountain where he had been scaring, or at least amusing, hikers while friends videotaped his antics. Backed by the American Civil Liberties Union, Jonathan Doyle is suing the state, arguing that the requirement to pay $100 for a special use permit 30 days in advance and get a $2 million insurance bond violates his free speech rights. "The underlying activities are humorous, but the principle's important," said Jon Meyer, a lawyer representing Doyle. "We're talking about a very small-scale activity in a very large place. We don't believe there's any legitimate government role in regulation."

Asia

Gates sees war gains—but can Afghans hold them?

COMBAT OUTPOST SABIT QADAM, Afghanistan (AP)—The Taliban are reeling. U.S. and Afghan troops are clicking. The war is going really well. That's what Pentagon chief Robert Gates heard in two days with troops and commanders. Much less clear: the hoped-for advances in the Afghan government's ability to provide basic services and extend its authority beyond Kabul, just months before the American troop drawdown begins.

Gates visited some of the most hotly contested parts of the country, where the effects of President Barack Obama's 30,000-troop surge have been most keenly felt, as the Obama administration considers where to begin withdrawing and thinning out U.S. forces. The defense secretary's very presence in some far-flung combat bases was meant to show the progress the U.S.-led international military force claims.

"The closer you are to the fight, the better it looks," he told reporters Tuesday at a U.S. combat outpost to the west of here, in Kandahar province

The view from near the front lines may be improving nearly 10 years into the war, but it can't obscure the central question of what comes next. The search for effective Afghan governing—for someone to take over the territory the military has secured—will be a central issue as Congress scrutinizes Obama's war strategy and his commitment to begin winding down U.S. combat involvement. The top U.S. commander in Kabul, Army Gen. David Petraeus, is scheduled to testify on Capitol Hill next week. The second-ranking U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Army Lt. Gen. David Rodriguez, said in an interview with reporters Tuesday that one reason for optimism is that the Taliban's former key strongholds of Helmand and Kandahar provinces are no longer fully in their control.

AP

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates speaks to U.S. Marines during his visit to the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment at Forward Operating Base Sabit Qadam in Afghanistan's Helmand province Tuesday, March 8, 2011.

"That's no longer their home field," Rodriguez said. The key difference, he said, has been the impact of greatly increased numbers of U.S. and Afghan military forces operating in southern Afghanistan over the past year.

He said of the Taliban: "They don't own that like they used to."

True, but neither does the Kabul-based government of President Hamid Karzai, who has installed effective local governors in some places and corrupt warlords in others. The first handovers of security control to Afghanistan late this year are likely to be far from these Taliban homelands.

The Taliban, meanwhile, are presumed to be gearing up for a spring offensive, although U.S. officials say the Islamist movement that ruled Afghanistan until U.S. forces arrived in October 2001 will find the going much tougher than in past years.

"They are going to feel more emboldened to carry out their attacks to try and ... try to reassert their authority," said Lt. Col. Jason Morris, commander of 3rd battalion, 5th Marine regiment, based at Combat Outpost Sabit Qadam, in Sangin district. "I would tell you they are going to have a real hard time doing that" because U.S. and Afghan forces "are going to meet them at every turn."

At each Gates stop, optimism was in such full bloom—especially at outposts like this one in the Taliban's southern heartland and to the east in Kandahar province -- that it was hard to detect a discouraging word. Caution, maybe. Discouragement, no.

Gates said on Monday he thinks the U.S. is "well positioned" to proceed with some troop withdrawals in July, as Obama promised when he angered many Democrats by deciding in December 2009 to escalate a war that was at best in a stalemate.

In Kandahar, Gates talked with village and tribal elders, a local police chief and a nervous-looking group of 10 fresh police recruits in neatly pressed beige uniforms. They are the vanguard of a new approach here and in more than two dozen other areas across the country to protecting communities by linking the police more closely to local authorities.

"This is encouraging on the ground," Gates said, in part because local authorities are starting to get civilian help from provincial leaders. This is seen as a way to lessen the appeal of supporting—tacitly or otherwise—the Taliban.

"I do feel like the pieces are coming together," Gates said.

But the crucial question—whether the highly touted progress of recent months will hold as the Taliban mount their expected attempted comeback—leaves Gates ready to inject a note of caution.

"The gains are fragile and reversible," he said. "The fight this spring and this summer is going to be very tough. We expect the Taliban to try to take back much of what they've lost, and that will really in many respects be the acid test of how effective the progress we have made is going to be."

Chinese farmers moved into apartments in land grab

JIANGZHUANG VILLAGE, China (AP)—First, the taps ran dry. Now, Sun Yueming wonders when the electricity will be cut.

His family is one of two holdouts in this otherwise abandoned village in northern China, resisting a local government campaign to move farmers off their ancestral lands and into apartments.

As China tries to protect farmland from development, officials are going after the land underneath farmers' homes instead. The relocations, often forced and at compensation levels deemed unfair, are raising tensions in a countryside already straining from protests over official misdeeds.

Sun's one-story wood and red brick house may be dingy and poorly insulated, but it has nine rooms, a well in the yard and plots to grow cucumbers and tomatoes. It also sits on land that has been home to generations of his family. Officials want him to give that up for a two-bedroom apartment with central heating, gas, and modern toilets—and to fork out 30,000 yuan ($4,600) for the relocation.

"They're taking my house. They should be giving me money. Why should I have to pay them?" he said at his home, about an hour's drive from Beijing.

The problems appear to stem from a well-intentioned new national land policy that has gone awry in the hands of greedy and sometimes corrupt local officials.

The policy, still in trial phase, seeks to preserve China's dwindling farmland while also making room for more commercial development. Farmers are moved into apartments, so that the land on which their houses sit can be converted to farmland. Then local governments are allowed to increase their land quota for development elsewhere by the same amount.

Official estimates show that farmland is close to the minimum of 300 million acres (120 million hectares) that the government considers necessary to grow food. That represents a loss of more than 20 million acres (8 million hectares) in the past decade.

Officials are eager to move farmers off the land, because land sales make up about half of local government revenue and, in some areas, as much as 80 percent. The governments earn huge profits by compensating farmers very little, said Xianfang Ren, senior analyst in Beijing for IHS Global Insight, a consulting firm.

"Basically, this scheme has become a new source of land supply for many local governments," she said.

Sun's village is a ghost town. The doors and windows have been ripped out of dozens of crumbling houses. The yards are strewn with abandoned items: broken wooden chairs, a torn leather couch, a dirty yellow teddy bear. An eerie silence has replaced the barking dogs, playing children and chatting villagers on street corners.

Many farmers are happy to cut their ties to the land for better living standards, particularly those able to find jobs in nearby cities. It's a millennial change in lifestyle as they move into apartment buildings for the first time.

Large 7.3 earthquake hits northeast Japan; no damage

TOKYO (AP)—A magnitude 7.3 earthquake hit off Japan's northeastern coast Wednesday, shaking buildings hundreds of miles away in Tokyo and triggering a small tsunami. There were no immediate reports of significant damage or injuries.

The quake struck at 11:45 a.m. local time and was centered about 90 miles (150 kilometers) off the northeastern coast—about 270 miles (440 kilometers) northeast of Tokyo—at a depth of about 5 miles (8 kilometers), Japan's meteorological agency said.

A 24-inch (60-centimeter) tsunami reached the coastal town of Ofunato, in Iwate prefecture, with other towns reporting smaller waves reaching shore about 30 minutes after the quake.

"We have confirmed that small tsunami have come up on the shores, but we have no reports of damage at this point," said Shinobu Nagano, an emergency and disaster response official in Iwate. "We are still trying to determine the impact of the quake."

Some train lines in the area were temporarily stopped after the quake, but they were restarted shortly after noon. Tohoku Electric Power said there was no damage at its nuclear power facility in the region.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center in Hawaii said a Pacific-wide tsunami was not expected.

There was a 6.3 magnitude aftershock shortly after the main quake, the meteorological agency said.

In Tokyo, office buildings swayed and creaked for about 30 seconds during the quake.

Japan lies on the "Ring of Fire"—an arc of earthquake and volcanic zones that stretches around the Pacific Rim and where about 90 percent of the world's quakes occur.

In 1933, about 3,000 people were killed around Ofunato by an earthquake and tsunami that had a maximum wave height of 94 feet (28.7 meters), according to the USGS. In 1896, a magnitude 8.5 earthquake generated a tsunami that killed 27,000 people in the area.

ASIAN BRIEFS

PH anti-graft prosecutor faces impeachment

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A Philippine congressional committee has ruled there is "probable cause" to impeach the government ombudsman, who has been accused of failing to investigate former Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and other top officials for alleged corruption. Rep. Neil Tupas said Tuesday that the justice committee ruling will now elevate the impeachment complaint against Merceditas Gutierrez to the whole 283-member House of Representatives. The representatives will debate then vote later this month whether to impeach Gutierrez and send her to the Senate for trial. Gutierrez has denied the allegation. New President Benigno Aquino III has backed Gutierrez's impeachment, saying she has become an obstacle to his anti-graft battle.

Philippine plane gets stuck in mud, delays flights

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines (AP)—The landing gear of a commercial plane carrying about 100 people got stuck in a muddy area shortly before takeoff at an airport in the southern Philippines. The incident injured no one but has delayed several domestic flights. Local manager of Philippine Airlines Lorito Galarita says the left landing gear of an A320 Airbus plane accidentally veered off the runway and got stuck in a muddy field while maneuvering for takeoff from Zamboanga. Galarita says about 100 passengers and crewmen safely disembarked from the Manila-bound plane with the help of airport emergency personnel on Wednesday. There was no major damage to the aircraft, according to airline officials.

Malaysia's Mahathir defends legacy in memoir

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad released his memoir Tuesday, defending decisions he made during a 22-year rule that critics say was marred by human rights abuses. Mahathir, who was one of Asia's longest-serving leaders when he retired in 2003, maintains in his book that his policies were in the country's best interests, but says he regrets that "the epithet 'authoritarian' appears without fail in all my detractors' assessments of me." "I had tried my best although I cannot be a judge of my own work," the 85-year-old Mahathir says. "It is up to the people of today and the future to pass judgment." The 800-page book—titled "A Doctor In The House," a reference to Mahathir's former medical career—hit stores in a blaze of publicity. Bookstore chain MPH displayed posters declaring the autobiography is "set to be the best-selling book of 2011."

World

WORLD BRIEFS

Yemeni army storms university, wounding 98

SANAA, Yemen (AP)—The Yemeni government escalated its efforts to stop mass protests calling for the president's ouster on Tuesday, with soldiers firing rubber bullets and tear gas at students camped at a university in the capital in a raid that left at least 98 people wounded, officials said. The army stormed the Sanaa University campus hours after thousands of inmates rioted at the central prison in the capital, taking a dozen guards hostage and calling for President Ali Abdullah Saleh to step down. At least one prisoner was killed and 80 people were wounded as the guards fought to control the situation, police said.

Presidential hopeful offers vision for 'new Egypt'

CAIRO (AP)—Arab League chief Amr Moussa, who is running for president of Egypt, suggested Tuesday that he would maintain a peace treaty with Israel and promised to fight corruption and turn the Middle East's most populous country into a modern democracy. A popular career diplomat and former foreign minister, Moussa announced last month that he plans to run in Egypt's presidential election later this year. Former President Hosni Mubarak was forced out on Feb. 11 after 18 days of popular protests demanding his ouster. Speaking to a few hundred Egyptians packed into a cultural center in the upscale neighborhood of Zamalek, Moussa said he would "listen to the young people of Egypt" and work with them to make Egypt a regional powerhouse.

Christians and Muslims clash in Cairo, 1 dead

CAIRO (AP)—Thousands of Christians and Muslims clashed Tuesday, with one Christian man killed and scores wounded as anger rose over the burning of a church in a Cairo suburb. It was the second burst of sectarian fighting in as many days and the latest in a string of violent protests over a variety of topics as simmering unrest continues nearly a month after mass protests led to the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak. The violence erupted after Coptic Christians held protests in several locations in Cairo against perceived persecution by the country's Muslim majority.

Gadhafi forces barrage rebels in east and west

AP

A Libyan volunteer stands guard near a defaced billboard of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi in the eastern town of Ras Lanouf, Libya, Tuesday, March 8, 2011.

TRIPOLI, Libya (AP)—After dramatic successes over the past weeks, Libya's rebel movement appears to have hit a wall of overwhelming power from loyalists of Moammar Gadhafi. Pro-regime forces halted their drive on Tripoli with a heavy barrage of rockets in the east and threatened Tuesday to recapture the closest rebel-held city to the capital in the west.

If Zawiya, on Tripoli's doorstep, is ultimately retaken, the contours of a stalemate would emerge—with Libya divided between a largely loyalist west and a rebel east as the world wrestles with the thorny question of how deeply to intervene.

President Barack Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron agreed to plan for the "full spectrum of possible responses" on Libya, including imposing a no-fly zone to prevent Gadhafi's warplanes from striking rebels. According to a White House statement, the two leaders spoke Tuesday and agreed that the objective must be an end to violence and the departure of Gadhafi "as quickly as possible."

A spokesman for the opposition's newly created Interim Governing Council in Benghazi, meanwhile, said a man who claimed to represent Gadhafi made contact with the council to discuss terms for the leader of four decades to step down. Mustafa Gheriani told The Associated Press the council could not be certain whether the man was acting on his own initiative or did in fact represent Gadhafi.

"But our position is clear: No negotiations with the Gadhafi regime," said Gheriani, who declined to say when contact was made or reveal the identity of the purported envoy.

Libyan state television denied that Gadhafi had sent an envoy to talk to the rebels.

In London, British Foreign Secretary William Hague said that neither Gadhafi nor rebel forces appeared currently able to establish supremacy. "At the moment ... it seems that either side lacks the immediate power to overthrow the other," he said.

Later Tuesday, Gadhafi made a surprise appearance at a hotel hosting foreign correspondents in Tripoli, arriving just before midnight. He raised his fist in the air as he walked from his car to the hotel, then he went into a room separated by curtains for exclusive interviews with a Turkish and a French television station.

He stayed about an hour, then he left without speaking to the AP and other news organizations waiting outside.

"Gadhafi was in a very good mood and he wanted to clarify the situation in Libya," Abdelmajid al-Dursi, Gadhafi's director of foreign media said afterward.

Zawiya, a city of 200,000, was sealed off under a fifth day of a destructive siege, with conflicting reports of who was in control. A brigade led by one of Gadhafi's sons, Khamis, is believed to be leading the assault, shelling neighborhoods with tank and artillery fire from the outskirts and trying to push troops in to the city's central Martyrs Square where rebels had set up camp.

The city hospital has been overwhelmed with dead and wounded and many houses have been damaged, according to residents who escaped the past two days. One man who slipped out of the city on Monday said pro-Gadhafi forces had seized the central square.

An adviser to the Libyan Foreign Ministry in Tripoli on Tuesday also claimed that government troops were in control, raising the green flag over the square. The adviser, who is originally from Zawiya, said he was trying to mediate a cease-fire with remaining rebels. He spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the talks.

But a resident of the nearby town of Sabratha said people who fled from Zawiya on Tuesday afternoon told him fighting continued, with rebels back in control of the square. He said they reported hit-and-run attacks between the two sides.

The various reports could not be independently confirmed. Electricity, phone and Internet services have all been cut in the city, making it impossible to reach witnesses inside Zawiya, just 30 miles west of Tripoli.

The recapture of Zawiya would be a significant victory for Gadhafi, easing a threat just outside his main bastion in the capital. If his forces can hold it, it would free up troops to deploy against other rebel-held areas.

The fall of Zawiya to anti-Gadhafi residents early on in the uprising that began Feb. 15 had illustrated the initial, blazing progress of the opposition. The uprising swept over the entire eastern half of the country, breaking it out of the regime's control, and seized Zawiya and several other cities and towns in the northwestern pocket of the country where Gadhafi's regime was confined.

But the government could be regaining some balance and its capability to lash back with powerful force.

The battle is far from over and could be drawn out into a long and bloody civil war. The latest round of fighting on opposite ends of Libya's Mediterranean coast once again revealed the weakness and disorganization of both sides.

Even if it ends with Zawiya's recapture, the long siege of the city underlined the rebels' tenacity and the struggles of even a reportedly elite force like the Khamis Brigades to crush them.

At the same time, Gadhafi's regime has been using its air power advantage more each day to check a rebel advance west toward Tripoli on the main coastal highway leading out of the opposition-controlled eastern half of the country. The increasing use of air power underlines the vulnerability of the rebel forces as they attempt to march across open, desert terrain - but it also could prompt world powers to impose a no-fly zone over Libya to deny Gadhafi that edge.

In the east, Gadhafi's forces succeeded over the weekend in blunting the rebels' attempt to march toward Tripoli, repelling them from Bin Jawwad, a small town 375 miles (600 kilometers) east of the capital, and driving them back to the oil port of Ras Lanouf, further east.

On Tuesday, troops fired barrages of rockets at a rebel contingent that tried to move out from Ras Lanouf. At least 26 wounded were rushed to the hospital in the town, some of them with legs lost and other serious injuries, according to doctors there.

"I was hit in the arm and leg, my friend was wounded in the stomach," Momen Mohammad, 31, said while lying in a hospital bed.

Earlier in the day, warplanes launched at least five new airstrikes near rebel position in Ras Lanouf, one hitting a two-story house in a residential area, causing some damage. None of the strikes appeared to cause casualties, suggesting they were intended to intimidate the fighters, according to an Associated Press reporter who saw the strikes. The anti-regime forces were not taking any chances and were spreading out deep inside the desert around the area in small groups.

The rebels seem to have reached a point of their campaign where they need to figure out how to organize resupply lines and avoid becoming easy targets for warplanes in their march across the open desert region with little cover. The extent of their westward reach is a checkpoint about six miles (10 kilometers) west of Ras Lanouf.

In Benghazi, Libya's second largest city and the main rebel stronghold in east, there was an unusual attack after weeks of quiet that followed the rebel capture of the territory. Assailants in a car tossed a grenade at a hotel where foreign journalists were staying, but there were no casualties and only some light damage to windows, an opposition official said.

In diplomatic action, the United States and its NATO allies edged closer Monday to formulating a military response to the escalating violence in Libya as the alliance boosted surveillance flights over the country and the Obama administration signaled it might be willing to help arm Gadhafi's opponents. Europe, meanwhile, kick-started international efforts to impose a no-fly zone.

France and Britain have taken the lead in drafting a U.N. Security Council resolution that would establish a no-fly zone over Libya to prevent Gadhafi's warplanes from bombing civilians and rebels.

It still appeared unlikely that U.S. warplanes or missiles soon would deploy in Libya. British and French officials said the no-fly resolution was being drawn up as a contingency and it has not been decided whether to put it before the U.N. Security Council, where Russia holds veto power and has rejected such a move.

Western officials have said a no-fly zone does not require a U.N. mandate, but they would prefer to have one.

An official with a subsidiary of Libya's national oil company said Tuesday that production has dropped by about 90 percent, a reflection of the beating the OPEC member's oil sector is taking amid violence raging in the country.

Sirte Oil Co. is producing about 9,500 barrels per day, compared to normal production levels at about 95,000 barrels per day, said company official Ahmed Jerski.

Analysts estimate that more than half of Libya's almost 1.6 million barrels per day in production is being shut-in, and the disruption in exports has sent global oil prices skyrocketing.

The U.S. benchmark crude contract for April delivery was hovering slightly below $104 per barrel on Tuesday, retreating from highs of almost $107 per barrel a day earlier. The drop came as several OPEC ministers said they were talking informally about whether to ramp up production to offset the Libya supply drop.

The upheaval has also sparked a massive exodus by foreign workers in Libya fleeing the violence. As of Tuesday, 224,661 migrants had reached Libya's borders with Tunisia, Egypt, Niger and Algeria since February 20, according to the latest International Organization for Migration figures provided Tuesday to AP.

But a Red Crescent official said Tuesday that soldiers loyal to Gadhafi have blocked some 30,000 migrant workers from fleeing into Tunisia and forced many to return to work in Tripoli.

Ibrahim Osman of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies told The Associated Press that the migrant workers were rounded up and held in Libyan immigration buildings near the Tunisian border last week.

Focus

An Israeli woman holds a sign during a rally marking International Women's Day in Tel Aviv, Israel, Tuesday, March 8, 2011. AP

Equality for women a distant goal in the world

"In too many countries and in too many societies, women remain second-class citizens, denied their fundamental rights, deprived of legitimate opportunity."

By EDITH M. LEDERER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Egyptian women demanding equal rights on the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day were shoved by men who said they should go home where they belong. Congolese women asked their government to protect them from systematic rapes, and women in Croatia who lost their jobs accused the government of corruption.

But the centennial anniversary of the day established by socialist women to promote better working conditions, the right to vote and hold public office, and equality with men, also was marked Tuesday by festivities including dancing in the street in South Korea's capital and a 10-kilometer run by some 8,000 women in Mexico City.

Super-sleuth James Bond actor Daniel Craig got into the act—trading his signature suit for a flowing blond wig, print dress, pearls and heels for a short film marking the day that highlights the inequalities faced by women around the world.

Speaking at U.N. headquarters in New York, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recalled that 100 years ago "gender equality was a largely radical idea."

While progress since then should be celebrated, he said, "We must also remember that—in too many countries and in too many societies—women remain second-class citizens, denied their fundamental rights, deprived of legitimate opportunity."

Their second-class status was evident in Cairo's now famous Tahrir Square, which protesters who succeeded in ousting President Hosni Mubarak on Feb. 11 used as their base. Hundreds of women—some in headscarves and flowing robes, others in jeans—who marched to the square to celebrate the anniversary, demand equality and an end to sexual harassment were soon outnumbered by men who chased them out.

"They said that our role was to stay home and raise presidents, not to run for president," said Farida Helmy, a 24-year-old journalist.

In troubled Ivory Coast, thousands of women defiantly marched to the bloodstained street where seven female demonstrators armed only with tree branches symbolizing peace were brutally killed last week by soldiers in armored personnel carriers who opened fire.

The women had tried to march every day since Thursday's attack but lost their nerve in the face of an army loyal to strongman Laurent Gbagbo who has refused to relinquish the presidency to the internationally recognized winner of the November election, Alessane Ouattara.

The women escaped attack Tuesday, but hours later the army burst into Treichville, the downtown neighborhood where they marched, and killed at least four civilians. Reporters saw the bodies of three men and one woman on the blood-splattered floor of a clinic.

In Congo's capital, Kinshasa, the president's wife, Olive Kabila, joined the march against rape, which has long been used as a weapon of war in the country. At least 8,300 rapes were reported in 2009 but aid workers say the true toll is much higher.

In Croatia's capital, Zagreb, and the Adriatic port of Rijeka, protesters marking International Women's Day demanded jobs and called for the government to resign. In Manila, demonstrators demanded justice for "comfort women" forced into prostitution in World War II, and in Gaza, hundreds of Palestinian women called for an end to the rift between Hamas, which controls Gaza, and Fatah, which controls the West Bank.

At an all-star gathering of women in Washington, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said women must be included in any process of democratic reform in the Middle East.

"In the coming months and years, the women in Egypt and Tunisia and other nations have just as much right as the men to remake their governments—to make them responsive, accountable, transparent," she told the audience that included First Lady Michelle Obama and the female president of Kyrgyzstan and prime minister of Australia.

Former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet, who now heads the new U.N. agency to promote women's rights, said the pioneering women who launched the annual commemoration would probably look at the world today "with a mixture of pride and disappointment."

Over one million women and men took to the streets in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland on what was originally called International Working Women's Day on March 19, 1911 to demand an end to discrimination.

The day became popular in Eastern Europe, Russia and the former Soviet bloc, and eventually spread around the globe. In some regions, it lost its political flavor and became an occasion for men to express their love for women with candy and flowers while in other regions, women's struggle for human rights and political and social equality remained the focus.

In 1975, during International Women's Year, the United Nations began celebrating March 8 as International Women's Day. Two years later the U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a day for women's rights and international peace.

Despite major progress over the last 100 years, "the hopes of equality expressed on that first International Women's Day are a long way from being realized," said Bachelet, who became the first executive director of UN Women in January.

Girls are still less likely to be in school than boys, almost two-thirds of illiterate adults are women, and every 90 seconds a woman dies in pregnancy or due to childbirth-related complications despite the knowledge and resources to make births safe, she said. Women also continue to earn less than men for the same work and have unequal inheritance rights and access to land.

Despite some high-profile advances, Bachelet said, only 28 women are heads of state or government and just 8 percent are peace negotiators. Last week, the Inter-Parliamentary reported that while the number of women in legislatures reached an all-time high of 19.1 percent in 2010, "the target of gender balance in politics is still a distant one."

Environment

She flies on...and on...and on

» Oldest known wild bird in US returns to Midway to raise chick

MIDWAY ATOLL—The oldest known U.S. wild bird—a coyly conservative 60—is a new mother.

The bird, a Laysan albatross named Wisdom, was spotted a few weeks ago with a chick by John Klavitter, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist and the deputy manager of the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge.

The bird has sported and worn out 5 bird bands since she was first banded by U.S. Geological Survey scientist Chandler Robbins in 1956 as she incubated an egg. Chandler rediscovered Wisdom in 2001. In 1956, he estimated Wisdom to be at least 5 years old then since this is the earliest age at which these birds breed, though they more typically breed at 8 or 9 after an involved courtship lasting several years. This means, of course, that Wisdom is likely to be in her early sixties.

There must be something to all that fish oil she consumes because Wisdom does not look her age.

"She looks great," said Bruce Peterjohn, the chief of the North American Bird Banding Program at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Md. "And she is now the oldest wild bird documented in the 90-year history of our USGS-FWS and Canadian bird banding program," he added. "To know that she can still successfully raise young at age 60-plus, that is beyond words. While the process of banding a bird has not changed greatly during the past century, the information provided by birds marked with a simple numbered metal band has transformed our knowledge of birds."

Wisdom, Peterjohn said, has likely raised at least 30 to 35 chicks during her breeding life, though the number may well be higher because experienced parents tend to be better parents than younger breeders. Albatross lay only one egg a year, but it takes much of a year to incubate and raise the chick. After years in which they have successfully raised and fledged a chick—which on Midway is about two-thirds of the time—the parents may take the occasional next year off from parenting. Klavitter said that Wisdom also nested in 2006, 2008, 2009 and 2010.

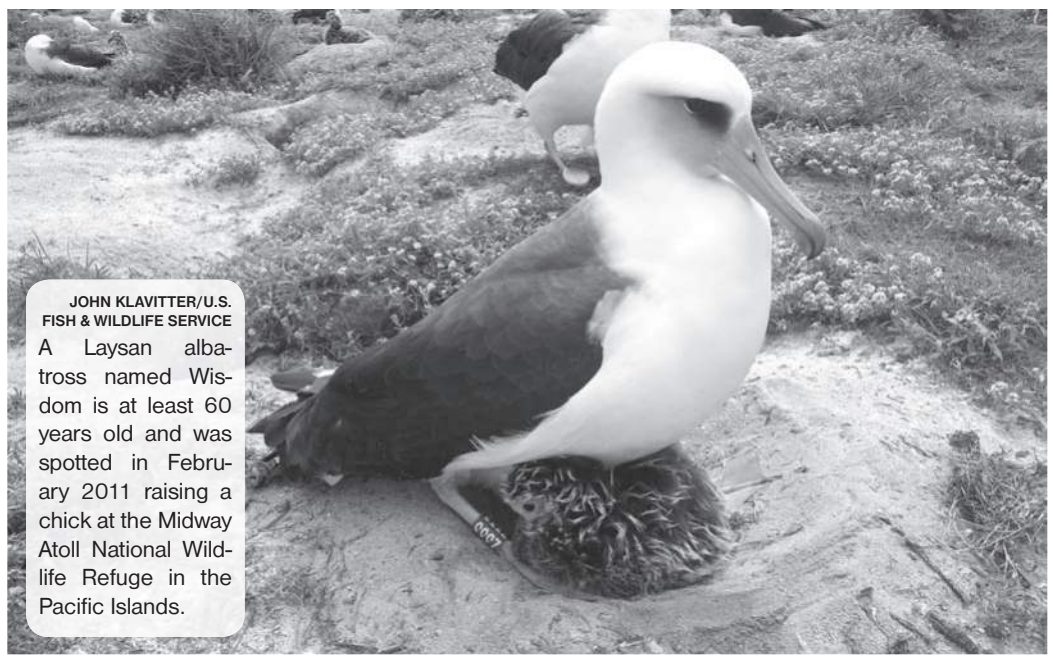
And since adult albatross mate for life, with both parents raising the young, it makes one wonder if Wisdom has had the same partner all these years or not.

Almost as amazing as being a parent at 60 is the number of miles this bird has likely logged—about 50,000 miles a year as an adult—which means that Wisdom has flown at least 2 to 3 million miles since she was first banded. Or, to put it another way, that's 4 to 6 trips from the Earth to the Moon and back again with plenty of miles to spare.

One reason for all these miles is that Laysan albatross spend the first 3 to 5 years after fledging at sea, never touching land. Then they return to breed in the northwestern Hawaiian Island chain but some of their feeding grounds are actually off the coast of western North America, including the Gulf of Alaska. The parents tend to feed closer to the islands where their nests are when the chicks are very young, but they regularly commute to the northern Pacific Ocean and even the Gulf of Alaska when the chicks are older or when the adults are incubating. They convert the fish eggs and squid oil they eat into a rich, oily liquid, which they regurgitate and feed to their chick.

In the non-breeding part of the year, albatross do not touch land; the birds, scientists believe, often sleep while flying over the ocean.

Peterjohn noted that Wisdom's remarkable record is just one example of the valuable data provided by bird banding. In addition to establishing longevity records for birds, banding data from the North American Bird Banding Program documents migratory patterns, provides critical harvest and survival information used to manage populations of migratory game birds, and supports research activities on many issues from toxicology to disease transmission and behavior. Since 1920, approximately 64.5 million birds have been banded by this Interior Department-Canadian Wildlife Service program, and of those, nearly 4.5 million bands have been recovered.



JOHN KLAVITTER/U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
A Laysan albatross named Wisdom is at least 60 years old and was spotted in February 2011 raising a chick at the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge in the Pacific Islands.

About albatross

Albatross are legendary birds for many reasons—in Samuel Coleridge's poem, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," a sailor has to wear an albatross around his neck as punishment for killing the bird. According to seafaring legends, albatross are the souls of lost sailors and should not be killed. However, as reported by James Cook, sailors regularly killed and ate albatross.

Albatross are remarkable fliers who travel thousands of miles on wind currents without ever flapping their wings. They do this by angling their 6-foot wings to adjust for wind currents and varying air speeds above the water.

Nineteen of 21 species of albatross are threatened with extinction, according to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Present threats to the birds include lead poisoning of chicks on Midway from lead paint used in previous decades; longline fishing, where the birds are inadvertently hooked and drowned, though conservation groups have banded with fishermen and dramatically lowered the number of deaths from this cause; and pollution, especially from garbage floating on the ocean.

The birds ingest large amounts of marine debris—by some estimates 5 tons of plastic are unknowingly fed to albatross chicks each year by their parents. Although the plastic may not kill the chicks directly, it reduces their food intake, which leads to dehydration and most likely lessens their chance of survival. In addition, albatross are threatened by invasive species such as rats and wild cats, which prey on chicks, nesting adults and eggs. Albatross evolved on islands where land mammals were absent, so have no defenses against them. ***(USGS)***

April to be proclaimed Environmental Awareness Month

April officially becomes Environmental Awareness Month in the CNMI on March 25 when Gov. Benigno Fitial signs a proclamation highlighting the importance of environmental health.

"We must all do our share to keep the CNMI clean," the proclamation states. "Individuals, families, visitors, businesses, and the government: we are all responsible to ensure that Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and the Northern Islands remain clean and green for our present and future generations. It is our obligation; it is our debt; it is our privilege. Let's all work together."

The Division of Environmental Quality, in partnership with numerous government, private and nonprofit groups, is coordinating several community events to celebrate Environmental Awareness Month:

- April 1: First Friday Films (6:30pm at American Memorial Park)
- April 9: Composting Workshop (9am to 11am at American Memorial Park)
- April 12, 13 and 14: Environmental Expo (8am to 3:30pm at American Memorial Park. Open to 4th and 5th grade students and educators)
- April 12, 13, 20, 21 (1pm, 4pm and 6pm at American Memorial Park)

-First Friday Film's People's Choice Awards film showings

-To vote in the First Friday Films People's Choice Award: www.firstfridayfilmssaipan.blogspot.com

- April 14: Trashin' Fashion Show (12pm to 1pm at American Memorial Park)
- April 15 and April 16: Islandwide cleanup
- April 29: Tree planting (9am to 3pm at selected sites around the island)

"Invest in the Real Green: Our Environment" is this year's slogan. Crafted by DEQ staff, the slogan is a play on words reflecting the importance of caring for the environment even in challenging economic times. The proclamation also declares April 22 CNMI Earth Day.

For more information on EAM festivities, visit the DEQ website: www.deq.gov.mp. ***(DEQ)***

NMC student's colorful illustration is EAM logo

An original illustration depicting native birds of the Marianas was selected as the winning logo in a competition to represent Environmental Awareness Month in April.

Park

"I was inspired by the beautiful scenery of the sunset, abundant bundle of flowers, green-leafy trees, rare but healthy birds around the island," said Mindy Park, the logo's designer and a student at Northern Marianas College.

The Division of Environmental Quality announced the competition, which was open to high school and college students, in mid-February. About a dozen entries were received and the winner was selected by the EAM Committee.

"This design caught our attention because it embodied the beauty of the CNMI," said Manny Borja, EAM co-chair. "It serves as a great reminder that this natural beauty is what we should be investing our time and effort in protecting."

The call for original logo designs required artists to incorporate the 2011 EAM slogan, "Invest in the Real Green: Our Environment." Park will receive a prize worth $200. ***(DEQ)***

Vote for EAM Films!

The Division of Environmental Quality's Environmental Awareness Month is just around the corner, and in celebration of its first year, First Friday Films wants you to choose which films it will be showing throughout April!

Log onto the First Friday Film website, www.firstfridayfilmssaipan.blogspot.com, to vote for the previously shown films from the last year that you would like to see again and to vote for the new films that you would like to see as part of Environmental Awareness Month.

Voting will be open until the end of March. The winning film from each of the four categories will be shown as part of our First Friday Films days on April 12–13 and 20–21. The schedule for the film screenings will be released on April 1.

All First Friday Film events are free and open to the public. Log on and vote today! www.firstfridayfilmssaipan.blogspot.com. ***(DEQ)***

CONTACT INFO

- Aric Bickel or Lisa Eller, Division of Environmental Quality: 664-8510
- Nancy Kelchner, National Park Service, American Memorial Park: 483-7253

Life & Style

Season 10 of "American Idol" kicks into high gear Wednesday night (at 8 on Fox) as the 13 finalists compete for the first time. Here's an assessment:

A quick look at 'American Idol's' TOP 13

By VERNE GAY
NEWSDAY

ASHTHON JONES

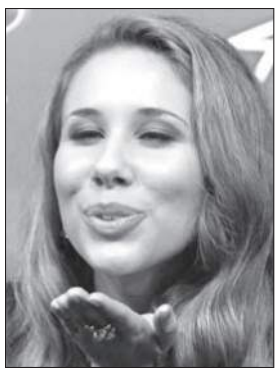
Operative word here is "diva," which tends to be more pejorative than complimentary; tends to call attention to herself more than the song (which is usually a certain Jennifer Holliday/Jennifer Hudson "Dreamgirls" standard).

LAUREN ALAINA

Country's been OK to "Idol"—even though country doesn't roll around that often on the show. Covered Faith Hill and Reba McEntire well; there's power in this voice—but uniqueness?

SCOTTY MCCREERY

Good ol' Southern 17-year-old, who functions well in his own little rusticated world; every other male on "Idol" is singing high, he's singing lowwww; still, a pure country "AI" victory is inconceivable.



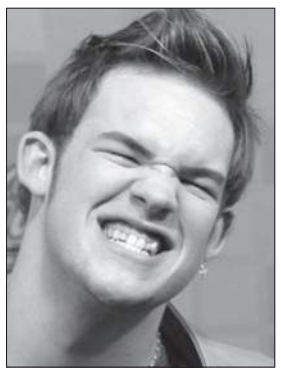
HALEY REINHART

Camera-ready Haley nearly sank during group rounds due to her Achilles' heel—vocal and mental discipline; has a cool "death growl" that accessorizes her lower notes but also tends to be a bit show-offy.

KAREN RODRIGUEZ

Smart move to mix Spanish and English in her semifinal performance, and if there's a big Hispanic vote on "AI"—is there?—then a slam dunk. Nice voice, crystal-clear phrasing, bland stage presence.

JAMES DURBIN



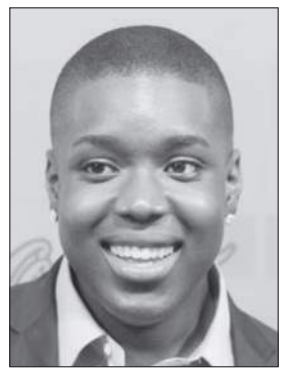
Mr. Enthusiasm sang "You've Got Another Thing Coming" a full octave higher than Judas Priest's Rob Halford so that he could close with a vocal rocket to the moon; exciting, but what else has he got?

PAUL MCDONALD

Front man of a (apparently) good regional band called the Grand Magnolias feels like someone who's been around a while and knows his way around a stage (he has and does). A get-out-the-vote charisma.

STEFANO LANGONE

Could win the whole thing—or be gone by Friday. Surest pop sound, vocally reminiscent of David Archuleta. Oversang Bruno Mars' "Just the Way You Are," but he's still here.



JACOB LUSK

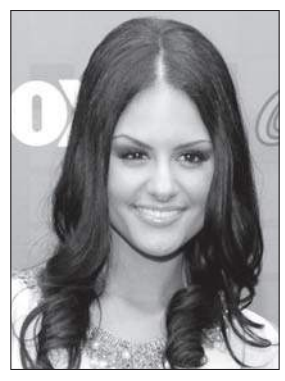
Glorious voice, but...he likes the standards (Billie Holiday, Leon Russell) just a little too much (so did Melinda Doolittle). Time to stretch, Jacob.

NAIMA ADEDAPO

A bit too eccentric for the "AI" electoral body; her soulful wild card performance, "For All We Know," was a winner.

THIA MEGIA

Comparisons to Charice are inevitable and unfortunate; has her own polished style, which is not all that distinctive, but has improved since her '09 "America's Got Talent" outing.



PIA TOSCANO

Can someone from Queens win "Idol" even if this someone has a) the best overall voice; and b) most commanding stage presence? Who knows...but she'll keep us watching.

CASEY ABRAMS

Jazz and blues specialist, but he'll do fine with other genres. Musically the most talented.

'Idol's' Chris Medina's recording dreams come true

NEW YORK (AP)—Even though "American Idol" contestant Chris Medina got cut before the finalists were announced, he's already living out his recording-star dreams with the debut of his first single.

The ballad "What Are Words" was written especially for Medina by Grammy-winning producer Rodney Jerkins; the video has already racked up more than 1 million views on Vevo.

During the Milwaukee auditions of "Idol," the 26-year-old barista moved the judges with his soulful rendition of The Script's "Breakeven" and his heart-wrenching backstory as caretaker for fiancee, Juliana Ramos. Ramos suffered a traumatic brain injury in a car accident just months before they planned to walk down the aisle.

Home videos of Ramos are featured in the "What Are Words" music video, as well as footage of their coffee house proposal and old photos of the smiling couple. A percentage of the single's iTunes sales will be dedicated to the Juliana Recovery Fund.

In a recent interview with The Associated Press, the Illinois native talked about the song, being famous and if he'll ever say, "I do."

AP: How has life been post 'Idol?'

Medina: It's been post-traumatic awesome. It's been fantastic. It's just so cool, so surreal. It's really a dream.

AP: Are fans stopping you on the street?

Medina: Yes, I have been recognized a lot. We just discussed this—when I have my hair back I don't really get stopped. But when I have my hair down I get stopped quite a bit. I still don't consider myself famous .unless I have my own magazine and until I walk into a bar and people's eyes open real wide and they pop with positivity.

Medina

AP: How does Juliana feel about being famous?

Medina: She loves it and you know, I can understand why. I can see why she loves it so much, you know, strangers walking up to her and giving her words of encouragement going, "You're going to do this. You're going to get better. I pray for you and you inspire me." It makes her try harder. It makes her want it, you know. I'm glad that this all turned out the way it did.

AP: How did you feel about Jennifer Lopez crying after cutting you from the show?"

Medina: I was shocked, surprised that she reacted to me the way she did. Because she was that way because she felt she didn't send me on my way properly and I thought she did a fantastic job. ... It was like getting hit with a pillow. It wasn't really like getting hit with a ton of bricks. And I think also being in the situation with my fiancee, it's just kind of, you learn not to expect anything anymore. You're just happy that you're in the situation that you're in. So I never expected to win. I just was happy to be there.

AP: You've put your marriage plans on hold for now, right?

Medina: The goal is for it not to be indefinitely, by no stretch. It's definitely something that I dream about and that I hope comes true, but I don't want to put that type of pressure on her. She has enough pressure trying to get out of bed and make it to the bathroom or hold a cup of water. It's tough. These brain injuries the hardest thing I think I've ever seen anybody go through and I don't want to put that pressure on her. I don't want to put that pressure on myself either. I just know that before she's my wife and before she's my fiancee, she's my best friend.

‘One and a Half Men’? How Sheen sitcom can go on

NEW YORK (AP)—Charlie Sheen is gone, but his sitcom “Two and a Half Men” is likely to stick around.

Although the eight-year-old show is aging and revolved around Sheen’s playboy character Charlie Harper, Warner Bros. Television and CBS have every incentive to try to keep it going after producers fired him on Monday.

The show, for one, is a huge moneymaker: It is the most popular comedy on the air, and in syndication. But the more important question might be whether viewers will buy a remade show next fall.

There are numerous examples of shows losing stars and plugging along with other actors, though not necessarily in the same roles. Just ask Dick Sargent, Jimmy Smits, Farrah Fawcett-Majors, Sandy Duncan and, yes, even Sheen.

AP

In this undated publicity image released by CBS, Jon Cryer, left, and Charlie Sheen are shown in a scene from “Two and a Half Men.”

In Sheen’s case, he worked for two years on ABC’s “Spin City,” essentially replacing original star Michael J. Fox in 2000 when Parkinson’s disease made it impossible for Fox to continue.

“NYPD Blue” continued for a decade with Smits after its original lead actor, David Caruso, decided he wanted to try movies.

Farrah Fawcett-Majors was television’s biggest new star when she left “Charlie’s Angels” in 1977, although she made guest appearances afterward. Ladd joined the cast the same year, with the show running another four seasons.

Duncan had a tough task in 1987: Replace Valerie Harper in “Valerie.” It was eventually renamed “The Hogan Family” and went off the air in 1991. Suzanne Somers left “Three’s Company” in 1981, and was replaced by Priscilla Barnes. The show ended in 1984.

Each of those new actors played different characters than the ones who left.

That wasn’t the case with Sargent, who moved right in as “Bewitched” star Elizabeth Montgomery’s husband Darrin Stephens when the original Darrin, Dick York, left in 1969. The show ended in 1972.

Even if “Two and a Half Men” returns, it’s highly unlikely that there will be a new Charlie Harper. The hard-partying Sheen embodied the character; some suggested it was written with his real-life persona in mind.

Viewers wouldn’t buy it, said Robert Thompson, director of the Bleier Center for Television and Popular Culture at Syracuse University.

“It would be like if your mother said, `The role of your father is now being played by so-and-so,’ and not `I’ve left your father and here is my new guy,’” Thompson said.

What would be important is for the show to keep the same “`Odd Couple’ plus a kid” dynamic embodied by the suave Harper, his nebbish brother portrayed by Jon Cryer and the Cryer character’s son, he said.

Characters coming and going in major series are no longer unusual, particularly if the series stay on the air for a long time. When “ER” came to an end on NBC, it had a completely different cast than when it started. “Law & Order” rotated actors.

“Viewers expect that,” said Tim Brooks, author of “The Complete Director to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows.” “They don’t expect shows to be static. People change over time. Relationships change over time.”

Even the deaths of stars haven’t stopped networks from keeping shows alive. “Chico and the Man” tried recasting when star Freddie Prinze committed suicide. And when John Ritter died of a heart ailment, ABC made the death of his character a central plot point in “8 Simple Rules.”

For TV networks and producers, there’s much less risk to keeping proven concepts alive than to hope audiences embrace something new.

And it’s not as if “Two and a Half Men” has worn out its welcome. The Nielsen Co. said it was the highest-rated comedy on television last week, even though CBS aired a rerun because production on the show had stopped.

Warner Bros. and CBS already made an investment in the show’s future: The cast is signed for next season. That included Sheen, until his firing.

Given all the attention paid to the story the past few months, there’s almost certain to be a big interest in a recast show if it premieres next fall.

“If I were an agent trying to sell my client to the producers, I would be making the point about how stupid it would be to take all the cultural equity and interest in this show and not bring it back again,” Thompson said.

CBS, in a quiet move overshadowed Monday by Sheen’s firing, began protecting itself if the show does not come back. It made a deal to continue the Monday comedy “How I Met Your Mother,” with all of its original actors, for two more years.

Executives at CBS and Warner Bros. had no public comments on “Two and a Half Men” and its future Tuesday.

Neither did Chuck Lorre, the show’s executive producer and an increasingly powerful force with CBS as the creative mind behind “The Big Bang Theory” and “Mike & Molly.” If Lorre wanted to continue “Two and a Half Men,” CBS would have reason to keep him happy.

And there could be a pride factor at stake: Since Sheen has spent the past couple of weeks publicly deriding Lorre, the producer might be sorely tempted to show how he can continue without him. Lorre had no comment Tuesday, a spokeswoman said.

Sheen calls ‘Two and a Half Men’ firing ‘illegal’

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Charlie Sheen says his dismissal from “Two and a Half Man” was “unconscionable.”

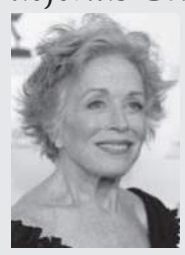
The 45-year-old actor lashed out at his former CBS and Warner Bros. Television bosses on his live Internet show, “Sheen’s Korner,” on Tuesday, the day after Warner Bros. said his services on “Two and a Half Men” had been terminated.

At the beginning of his prepared remarks, which lasted about 10 minutes, Sheen added that he believes that Monday’s decision was also illegal.

Using profane renditions of their names, Sheen attacked members of his “unwanted list”: CBS president Les Moonves, Warner Bros. Television Group president Bruce Rosenblum and “Two and a Half Men” executive producer Chuck Lorre.

But Sheen seemed to praise Warner Bros. Television president Peter Roth, saying that Roth’s heart “was always rooted in fairness.”

‘Men’ co-star Holland Taylor defends Sheen



Taylor

LOS ANGELES (AP)—While CBS is keeping mum about Charlie Sheen, one of his co-stars has been speaking out and sharing kind words about the embattled actor.

“Two and a Half Men” star Holland Taylor defended the actor she has worked with since the show began in 2003.

“Charlie was cordial and polite with all of his cast mates and crew, sometimes even courtly—and always witty,” Taylor said Tuesday in an e-mail to The Associated Press. “We watched movies at his house occasionally—warm evenings with interesting, spirited conversation. This is the guy I know.

“In this very sad and complicated time, I really have no comment,” she continued, “beyond valuing my own history with Charlie, and my abiding affection for him.”

Sheen was fired from the hit CBS show Monday. Holland is the first person connected to the show to publicly share thoughts on Sheen since his dismissal.

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Rango
Friday 4:00 7:00 9:30
Saturday 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:30
Sunday 1:00 4:00 7:00
Mon thru Thurs 4:00 7:00
Johnny Depp, Isla Fisher
Children’s/Family • Rated G
Synopsis
Helmer Gore Verbinksi (Pirates of the Caribbean) directs this family-oriented animated adventure starring the voice of Johnny Depp as a family pet who leaves the comfort of home in order to explore the outside world. John Logan (The Aviator) provides the script for the Paramount Pictures production. Abigail Breslin, Isla Fisher, Alfred Molina, Ray Winstone, Harry Dean Stanton, and Ned Beatty provide the voices for the rest of the cast.

Take Me Home Tonight
Friday 4:05 7:05 9:45
Saturday 1:05 4:05 7:05 9:45
Sunday 1:05 4:05 7:05
Mon thru Thurs 4:05 7:05
Ana Faris, Topher Grace
Comedy Drama • Rated R
Synopsis
Topher Grace and Anna Faris star in It's All Gone Pete Tong screenwriter/director Michael Dowse's coming of age comedy drama concerning a rowdy group of recent college graduates who venture out for one last night of fun before accepting the responsibilities of adulthood.

The Adjustment Bureau
Friday 4:10 7:10 9:50
Saturday 1:10 4:10 7:10 9:50
Sunday 1:10 4:10 7:10
Mon thru Thurs 4:10 7:10
Matt Damon, Emily Blunt
Science Fiction • Rated PG 13
Synopsis
Matt Damon and Emily Blunt headline this romantic sci-fi drama based on a short story by Philip K. Dick, and detailing the troubled love affair between a rising congressman and a gorgeous ballerina. The closer these two lovers get, the harder shadowy forces work to drive them apart by altering the very fabric of time and space.

Hall Pass
Friday 4:15 7:15 10:00
Saturday 1:15 4:15 7:15 10:00
Sunday 1:15 4:15 7:15
Mon thru Thurs 4:15 7:15
Owen Wilson, Jason Sudeikis
Comedy • Rated R

I Am Number Four
Friday 4:25 7:25 9:35
Saturday 1:25 4:25 7:25 9:35
Sunday 1:25 4:25 7:25
Mon thru Thurs 4:25 7:25
Alex Pettyfer, Timothy Olyphant
Science Fiction • Rated PG 13

Big Momma’s Like Father Like Son
Friday 4:20 7:20 9:40
Saturday 1:20 4:20 7:20 9:40
Sunday 1:20 4:20 7:20
Mon thru Thurs 4:20 7:20
Martin Lawrence, Brandon T. Jackson
Comedy • Rated PG 13

Unknown
Friday 4:30 7:30 9:55
Saturday 1:30 4:30 7:30 9:55
Sunday 1:30 4:30 7:30
Mon thru Thurs 4:30 7:30
Liam Neeson, Diane Kruger
Thriller • Rated PG 13

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Footage shows Lohan wearing necklace in theft case

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Lindsay Lohan spent roughly 25 minutes wearing a necklace inside a jewelry store that accused her of theft, surveillance video broadcast Tuesday shows.

"Entertainment Tonight" aired several snippets of footage shot by four cameras inside Kamofie & Co., a Venice jewelry store near Lohan's home. The footage shows the actress trying on three necklaces before putting on the one reported stolen roughly 20 minutes after entering the store.

Lohan

The surveillance video is part of evidence prosecutors plan to use against Lohan, who has pleaded not guilty to felony grand theft. She is scheduled to return to court on Thursday to tell a judge whether she intends to take a plea deal that includes guaranteed jail time.

She could also opt to fight the case, which would then proceed to a preliminary hearing that could end with Lohan being ordered to stand trial and being sent back to jail. The actress was on probation for a 2007 drunken driving case when police began investigating her for the necklace theft, and a judge has said he thinks she has violated her probation.

Video footage aired Tuesday shows Lohan, 24, chatting with a clerk while trying on several necklaces, all but one of which she quickly removed, according to the show. She placed one of her own necklaces over the store's necklace and continued to browse in the store, the video shows. The entertainment news show plans to air a third day of footage on Wednesday, showing Lohan leaving the store.

"Entertainment Tonight" heavily promoted the video and said Tuesday that it was its most popular story so far this year, with more than one million page views on its website. The video was sold by a representative of Kamofie to a commercial images unit of The Associated Press, which then licensed it exclusively to "Entertainment Tonight."

Christopher Spencer, a crisis management expert who represents the jewelry store, explained in a statement Monday the reason the footage was sold.

"Most important, we were upset with the various mischaracterizations we were seeing and hearing about the video and its contents, and we felt the video should be allowed to speak for itself," Spencer's statement read. "With regard to the question of Lindsay Lohan's guilt or innocence, we repeat that Kamofie and Company never gave permission to Ms. Lohan to remove the necklace from the store. The rest is up to the jury."

"Lindsay's in some very hot water here," former Los Angeles Deputy District Attorney Marcia Clark, who prosecuted the O.J. Simpson murder case, told "Entertainment Tonight" after watching the footage. The veteran prosecutor also noted that Lohan made clear she had put the necklace on by showing it to a companion, and continued to interact with a store clerk.

The video does not contain any audio, so Clark said it was difficult to determine Lohan's intent.

"There must be more that we don't know or this case would have settled based on the video," said Lou Shapiro, a defense attorney who also viewed the entire tape at the request of "Entertainment Tonight."

He said Lohan's conduct didn't appear to be of someone who walked into the store prepared to steal the necklace.

"She wasn't wearing a jacket and she didn't put it in a pocket, which is more consistent with a theft," said Shapiro, who spoke to the AP.

Other defense attorneys have said the sale of the video could hurt prosecutors, who also have other evidence in their case against the "Mean Girls" star.

Hello I must be going: singer Phil Collins retires

LONDON (AP)—British singer and drummer Phil Collins has used his personal website to announce his retirement in a bid to clarify recent speculation over his career.

In a post titled "Breaking News," the London-born multiple Grammy award winner said he wanted to explain his reasons "for calling it a day" in response to articles claiming he was quitting the music business.

"Many of the articles printed over the last few months have ended up painting a picture of me that is more than a little distorted," Collins, 60, explained in the message posted Monday.

He said he is stopping music so he can be a full time father to his two young sons "on a daily basis"—not because of bad reviews, bad press or because he doesn't "feel loved."

Speculation about a possible last act for Collins was sparked by an interview in April's issue of FHM magazine in which the former Genesis drummer and frontman said "it feels like a good time to stop for awhile."

Collins

Contradictory articles soon followed, some focusing on health problems, detailed in the FHM article as a reason behind a possible retirement or break from music.

An article in the Daily Mail said a Texas clairvoyant had lead Collins to believe he is the reincarnation of an Alamo survivor. It reported that since 2007 an interest in the 1836 battle—where 1,500 Mexican troops lay siege to 200 Texans—had slowly taken over his life.

Collins has sold an estimated 100 million albums as a solo artist, but he told FHM he looks at events like the MTV Music Awards and says he "can't be in the same business as this."

"I don't really belong to that world and I don't think anyone's going to miss me," he told the magazine.

In his website post, Collins said it's "a mystery" why the recent articles about his career were printed, suggesting that some of his comments were taken out of context.

He said some of the articles had portrayed him as a "tormented weirdo," but reassured fans there was "no need for the straitjacket."

The 60-year-old singer of hits like "Groovy Kind of Love," "In the Air Tonight," "Another Day In Paradise," "Against All Odds (Take a Look at Me Now)," and "Separate Lives" with Marilyn Martin, has also won an Academy Award for his soundtrack to the film "Tarzan." His album "No Jacket Required" won a Grammy for album of the year in 1985.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Bill Clinton writes preface for spy novel

NEW YORK (AP)—Bill Clinton has entered the spying game. The former president, whose memoir sold millions of copies, has written a preface for his friend Thomas Caplan's "The Spy Who Jumped Off the Screen." The book is a thriller about movie star and former intelligence officer Ty Hunter and his race to keep nuclear warheads out of the wrong hands. Clinton, who roomed with Caplan when both were at Georgetown University, praises the novel as a "stylish, involving, utterly contemporary puzzle." Viking, an imprint of Penguin Group (USA), announced Tuesday that the book comes out in early 2012.

Ex-Alice in Chains bassist dies in Salt Lake City

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Police say officers have found former Alice in Chains bassist Mike Starr dead in a home near Salt Lake City's downtown area. Salt Lake City Police Sgt. Shawn Josephson says officers responded to the home Tuesday afternoon. He says details about the cause or circumstances of the 44-year-old's death were not immediately available. It wasn't immediately clear who owned the home or phoned police. Starr was the original bassist for Alice in Chains, an iconic Seattle-based band that made its mark on the grunge scene of the early 1990s. He left the group in 1993. Josephson says Salt Lake City police arrested Starr last month on suspicion of possession of medications without a required prescription. Starr appeared on the third season of VH1's "Celebrity Rehab with Dr. Drew" in 2009.

Supermom blogger Kelly Oxford has book deal

NEW YORK (AP)—Kelly Oxford is a blogger, Twitter star and inspiration for a new CBS sitcom. Now, she has a book deal. It Books and HarperCollinsCanada, imprints of HarperCollins Publishers, announced Tuesday that they would publish her memoir in the summer of 2012. The currently untitled book will be a "a series of side-splitting essays." Oxford, who lives in Calgary, Alberta, is a wisecracking, stay-at-home mother of three with such famous fans as Jimmy Kimmel and Jessica Alba. Her life is the basis of "The Mother of All Something," a planned CBS sitcom for which Alba will serve as executive producer. CBS already airs the Twitter-inspired sitcom "$(hash)(asterisk)! My Dad Says."

PETA protests pigeon racing at Tyson's Nevada home

HENDERSON, Nev. (AP)—People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals demonstrated outside Mike Tyson's suburban home to protest the former boxing champion's role in pigeon racing. Henderson police spokesman Todd Rasmussen said Tuesday the PETA demonstration on Monday outside Tyson's gated hillside neighborhood was peaceful. The Las Vegas Review-Journal reported that some of the 20 protesters carried signs reading, "Featherweights: No match for a Heavyweight," and "Mike doesn't give pigeons a fighting chance." An attempt to reach Tyson through his wife on Tuesday was not successful. Tyson has been a pigeon racing breeder and fan since childhood in Brooklyn, N.Y. PETA's Lisa Lange says the protest followed Sunday night's debut of the Animal Planet show, "Taking on Tyson." It features Tyson competing with pigeon racers in the New York City area.

Promise of secrecy is sacred to cooks who relish mystery

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I'm responding to the letter from "Craving the Cakes in Florida" (Jan. 30), complaining that her sister-in-law wouldn't reveal the secret ingredient in a late relative's pancake recipe. As a cook who has many of my own kitchen secrets, I'd be upset if one of my family members were to reveal them to anyone I didn't authorize. A promise is a promise, and it should never be broken!

Believe it or not, recipes are intellectual property. How presumptuous for "Craving" to expect her in-law to divulge a secret from the family's tradition. She should enjoy the meal when she's at her sister-in-law's, and work on developing her own mystery dish.

STAYING MUM IN CHARLESTON, S.C.

DEAR STAYING MUM: Many readers agreed with you about the importance of keeping a promise. Some of them also were sure they knew the secret ingredient that made the cakes so memorable: buttermilk, ricotta cheese, nutmeg, vanilla extract, Irish Cream, Kahlua, lemon juice, oatmeal, yogurt, cinnamon, malted milk, cornmeal, sour cream and cardamom. (This is making me hungry!) Read on:

DEAR ABBY: I obtained a recipe upon the death of an aunt who wouldn't share it until she passed away. I did not think she was selfish. I fondly remember her serving these cookies the few times a year we saw her.

I bake them for special occasions—holidays, birthdays, graduations, etc.—and mail them to family and friends out of state. The treats are special and everyone looks forward to receiving them. If everyone had the recipe, it would lose its distinction.

When I am no longer able to bake them, I will happily pass the recipe on to a relative to continue the tradition.

BETH IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR ABBY: I was taught a promise is sacred. Do you really think the in-law should sacrifice her honor over a pancake recipe? They may be delicious, but breaking my word would leave a bitter taste in my mouth.

PROMISE KEEPER IN VIRGINIA

DEAR ABBY: A friend gave me a cinnamon bun recipe that had been in his family for as long as anyone could remember. About 15 years ago, his house caught fire and he lost most of his possessions, including that recipe. His siblings had misplaced it and the only person to have it was me.

Sometimes it's good to share something, if only with one other person. That way, treasures aren't lost forever.

LISA IN RENO

DEAR ABBY: Because the relative had shared the recipe with "Craving's" sister-in-law, technically it was no longer a secret. If it was to be kept a secret, then shouldn't the relative have told no one? I feel the in-law is free to share the secret with a clear conscience. I'd like to know what it is, too!

FOODIE IN TENNESSEE

DEAR ABBY: I think I know the ingredient in the hot cakes recipe. My daughter was co-owner of a small restaurant. Everyone begged for the secret of the waffles there. It was bacon grease in the batter. Not healthy—but delicious.

MARGARET IN WHITTIER, CALIF.

DEAR ABBY: I have been cooking for about 50 years. You can bet your boots the mystery ingredient is beer. That's how my daddy made them. Use it instead of water for really light pancakes.

PATRICIA IN TEXAS

DEAR ABBY: I'll bet the secret is the same as my family's: substitute half the regular boxed pancake mixture for ordinary white cake mix. Breakfast on our camping trips is always terrific with these fluffy treats.

PANCAKE PAL IN LONG BEACH

DEAR ABBY: I grew up in a family-owned restaurant. Grandma used club soda instead of water in the pancake batter. The results? Perfection.

LAURENE IN CONNECTICUT

DEAR ABBY: "Craving" should take a pancake to a retired home economics teacher. They can often discern the most mysterious of ingredients.

SHARON IN NEBRASKA

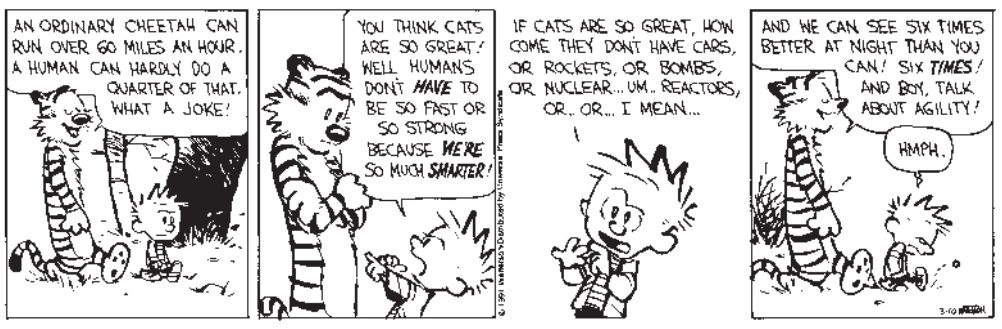
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $12 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


AN ORDINARY CHEETAH CAN RUN OVER 60 MILES AN HOUR. A HUMAN CAN HARDLY DO A QUARTER OF THAT. WHAT A JOKE!
YOU THINK CATS ARE SO GREAT? WELL HUMANS DON'T HAVE TO BE SO FAST OR SO STRONG BECAUSE WE'RE SO MUCH SMARTER!
IF CATS ARE SO GREAT, HOW COME THEY DON'T HAVE CARS, OR ROCKETS, OR BOMBS, OR NUCLEAR... UM.. REACTORS, OR.. OR... I MEAN...
AND WE CAN SEE SIX TIMES BETTER AT NIGHT THAN YOU CAN! SIX TIMES! AND BOY, TALK ABOUT AGILITY!
HMPH.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

OKAY, HONEY. PLAN ONE WAS REJECTED. LET'S THINK ABOUT OTHER WAYS TO GET OPRAH TIX.
YOU'RE SWEET, HONEY. BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT FOR ME...
WE'LL GO TO CHICAGO. HAVE RIBS AT TWIN ANCHORS. PIZZA AT MALNATI'S. COFFEE AT INTELLIGENTSIA.
IT'LL BE LIKE OUR SECOND HONEYMOON.
WE NEVER HAD A FIRST HONEYMOON. WE SLEPT IN MY PARENTS' BASEMENT FOR A YEAR.
SO IT'LL BE LIKE OUR FIRST HONEYMOON... AND WITHOUT THE STINK EYE FROM YOUR DAD AT BREAKFAST EVERY MORNING.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU DON'T HAVE ANY ESPRESSO DRINKS?! A BOOKSTORE WITHOUT ESPRESSO IS LIKE A... A...
HELP ME OUT HERE.
A GYM WITHOUT TANNING BEDS.
A GYM WITHOUT TANNING BEDS!!

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Houston acronym
5 Have a bug
8 Urban pall
12 Black, in poetry
13 Expert
14 Hemingway nickname
15 Join with a blowtorch
16 Ultra-modernist
17 Formerly, formerly
18 Moe, Larry or Shemp
20 Croon
22 Property
26 Get more ammo
29 Shade source
30 Trigger's rider
31 — Major (constellation)
32 Pigs' digs
33 Existed
34 That man's
35 Buck's mate
36 Carries
37 Integer, e.g.
40 Daytime drama
41 Cruel
45 Too
47 Couric's network
49 Thought
50 Cut of pork
51 Reaction to skyrockets
52 Standard
53 Undersized
54 Aye opposer
55 Icky stuff

DOWN
1 Information
2 Help underhandedly
3 One's performance
4 Pyrenees nation
5 Breathing problem
6 Anger
7 Without precision
8 Exhausted
9 "Dennis the Menace" girl
10 Chances, for short
11 "Roscoe"
19 Jewel
21 Doctrine
23 "— Eat Cake"
24 Ripped
25 Spud's buds
26 Rhine feeder
27 Huron neighbor
28 Booth, e.g.
32 Trace
33 Employed
35 "CSI" evidence
36 Commandment count
38 Daft
39 Full, as eyebrows
42 "American —"
43 Infamous fiddler
44 Moist
45 Matterhorn, for one
46 Reed or Rawls
48 Feathery neckpiece

Solution time: 25 mins.

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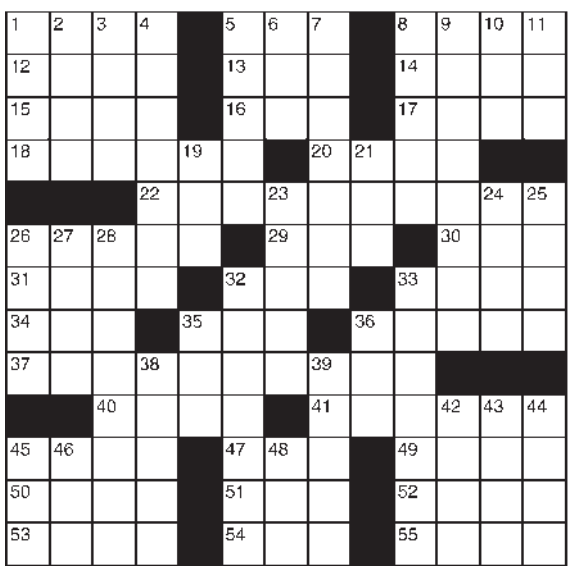
			M	E	N			E	I	A		

Yesterday's answer 3-10



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CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Olivia Wilde, 27; Carrie Underwood, 28; Jon Hamm, 40; Sharon Stone, 53

Happy Birthday: You can achieve greatness if you focus on what you like to do most. Turning your skills and knowledge into a profitable endeavor is possible if you stop letting your uncertainty stand in your way. You can overcome any obstacle you face by relying on past experience and the expertise of colleagues and friends. Your numbers are 9, 12, 19, 21, 26, 34, 41

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You may feel like pushing and shoving in order to get your way but it won't help. You are better off showing what you have to offer first. Romance can change the way you are treated. Do something special for someone you love. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Don't make decisions based on what you want to believe; get the facts and figures. If you let your heart rule your head, you are likely to lose emotionally and financially or with regard to your status and reputation. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Back away from anyone trying to get something from you. Do not lend, borrow or donate. Compliments will get you further than complaints. Boost your confidence by updating your image. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You've got more control than you realize. Voice your opinions and plans and you will get the go-ahead from people you need in your corner. Don't let uncertainties in your personal life cause you to miss out on an opportunity. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): It's OK to brag a little but be prepared to do the legwork. You will disappoint someone you are trying to impress, making it difficult to redeem your position. Positive thought and progressive action will help you avoid loss. ✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Spend more time on the projects, hobbies and interests you enjoy and it will lessen your stress and help you make personal and professional choices that will help you advance. Turn what you know and do best into a moneymaking endeavor. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Take a break. Enjoy the company of friends or get involved in a creative hobby that inspires you. Participate in social activities or events geared toward making new friends. Love is on the rise. Now is the time to expand creatively and personally. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Don't fold under pressure. Not everyone has to like what you are doing. Make decisions that will suit you best and, if that means personal or professional changes, you should forge ahead. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You'll be torn between two options. Take the path that excites you the most. The past will haunt you if you don't reconnect with the interests and people you miss. Follow your heart. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Put more time and effort into your home and family. Keeping track of old friends or attending a reunion will help you with a decision you need to make now. You may be tricked by someone's sentimentality. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Do something that makes you happy without being too extravagant, like having dinner with a friend or getting in touch with someone you miss. Don't let emotional matters take you down a path that will lead to upset. If something isn't going your way, just walk away. ✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Mix the old with the new and you will come up with something that works for you in the present. Make a point to let everyone know your plan and your intentions before you put pressure on anyone who is hesitant to help out. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are imaginative and inventive. You can combine the past and present in order to build a brighter future and strong relationships.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			1					
2		9				6		4
7			8		2			3
		6				5		7
				3				
5		1				2		
9			2		3			5
8		4				3		9
					5			

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/10

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

2	8	5	1	3	6	9	4	7
6	4	9	8	5	7	2	3	1
1	7	3	4	2	9	8	6	5
5	3	7	9	4	2	6	1	8
4	2	1	6	8	5	7	9	3
8	9	6	3	7	1	5	2	4
3	1	2	7	9	8	4	5	6
7	5	4	2	6	3	1	8	9
9	6	8	5	1	4	3	7	2

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/9

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

JON STEWART **Solution: 8 letters**

S	J	D	E	S	K	R	C	H	G	E	M	M	Y	P
R	C	E	T	N	E	S	G	A	C	N	A	L	U	E
E	D	Y	W	B	A	U	E	N	T	N	I	P	I	R
W	L	M	M	I	A	H	E	T	H	E	P	T	O	F
E	A	U	O	L	S	R	S	A	O	E	R	M	A	O
I	N	S	M	O	W	H	T	C	T	U	U	E	Y	R
V	O	I	C	A	A	T	H	E	M	H	Q	M	R	M
M	D	C	L	M	A	E	E	P	N	O	E	Y	G	E
A	E	Y	S	N	M	R	E	R	Y	D	N	U	Y	R
R	N	K	C	I	N	T	E	O	A	N	E	K	T	N
I	Y	C	S	A	R	T	B	C	U	S	S	R	E	N
A	E	T	H	A	R	S	A	F	T	O	(T)	B	I	Y
N	R	T	U	O	U	T	D	I	U	(S)	U	E	R	L
Y	A	T	S	B	R	A	N	P	(O)	L	S	T	A	N
N	S	B	A	K	E	R	Y	(H)	C	O	O	P	V	M

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Yesterday's Answer: Movies

SALE: Recipes of Wonderword for Kings appear in newspapers but the puzzle of the day can be found on the Wonderword. For information about how to get Wonderword for Kings, please call 1-800-555-1234.

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WHATZIT Solution:
Break out in a cold sweat

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Saipan Tribune

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

JAVILI GENERAL PARTNERSHIP, Plaintiff, -v- DONG MIN JIN and SHUN YU JIANG, Defendants.	CIVIL ACTION NO. 10-0283 SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANTS:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is served upon you hereby, within twenty (20) days after the fourth publication of this Summons, and to deliver or mail a copy of our answer to the LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC, the Plaintiff's attorneys, whose address is Post Office Box 5222, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

By order of the above Court:

/s/ Clerk of Court

Dated this 07th day of FEBRUARY. 2011.

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Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 6-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $27 for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of the packages below.

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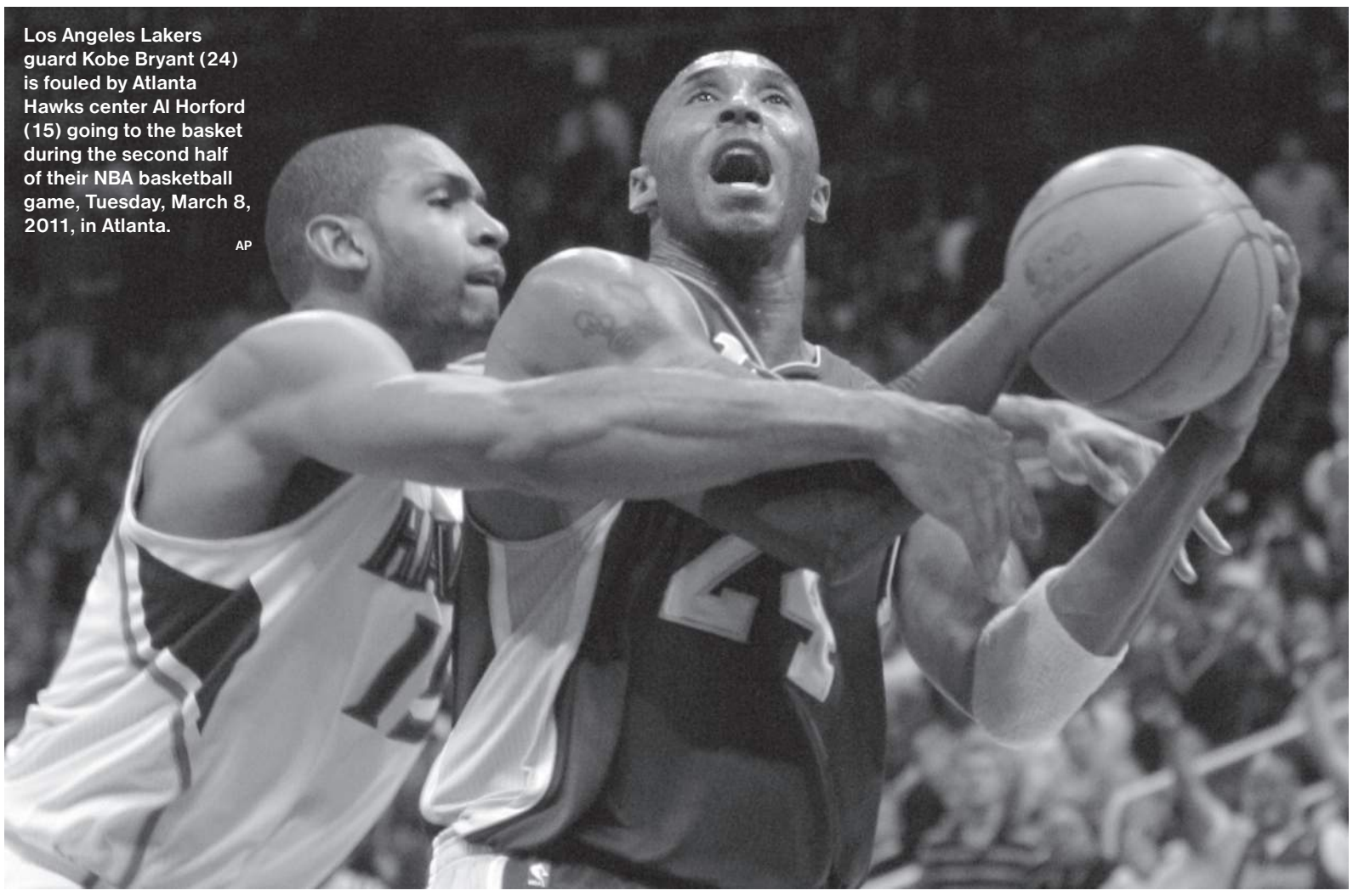
Bryant, streaking Lakers drop Hawks, 101-87



Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant (24) is fouled by Atlanta Hawks center Al Horford (15) going to the basket during the second half of their NBA basketball game, Tuesday, March 8, 2011, in Atlanta. AP

ATLANTA (AP)—Larry Drew remembers thinking as a young Lakers assistant coach that Kobe Bryant's talent "was off the charts" when the teen made his NBA debut with Los Angeles in 1996.

Fifteen years later, Drew isn't surprised to see Bryant still climbing the charts as the sixth-best scorer in NBA history.

Bryant scored 26 points to pass Moses Malone for sixth on the career scoring list and the Lakers beat Drew's Atlanta Hawks 101-87 on Tuesday night for their eighth straight win.

"He's very unique," said Drew, in his first season as the Hawks' coach, of the Lakers' star. "I was in L.A. when we traded for him, and you saw the talent.

"It was a matter of understanding and picking his spots and learning to play the game on the NBA level. And he did that. ... He's a phenomenal player."

Bryant, a 13-time All-Star, began the night 12 points from matching Malone's 27,409 points. He passed Malone when he made three free throws with 2:05 remaining in the first half.

Bryant has moved past an impressive list of Hall of Fame scorers this season. He passed Malone one week after eclipsing Elvin Hayes for seventh. He also has topped the scoring totals of Hakeem Olajuwon, Oscar Robertson, Dominique Wilkins and John Havlicek this season.

"I'm just very fortunate, that's all," Bryant said.

The Lakers took a three-game losing streak into the All-Star break. Since then, they've won eight straight, a streak that began with a similar 104-80 home win over the Hawks on Feb. 22.

Bryant said the Lakers "are just all on the same page."

"We're making people take contested shots and taking them out of areas they're comfortable in," Bryant said.

"It's not necessarily that we're winning games, but how we're winning them. We're really playing well. We're not making too many mistakes."

Bryant had good support as the Lakers overwhelmed the Hawks with their depth and power game inside.

The Lakers' 7-footers—Andrew Bynum and Pau Gasol—both had double-doubles and dramatically affected the Hawks' shot selection. Center Al Horford relied on jump shots for his 17 points.

Bynum had 16 points, 16 rebounds and three blocked shots. It was his third straight game with 16 or more rebounds.

"He wasn't the leading scorer but he still impacted the game," said the Lakers' Lamar Odom of Bynum. "That shows you how important he is to us."

Gasol had 14 points and 11 rebounds.

"Kobe is going to get his shots," said Atlanta's Joe Johnson. "I think we all knew we had to try to limit guys around him. I think the guys around him played big."

Josh Smith scored 16 points for the Hawks, who have lost four of five.

Drew used his small lineup, with Horford joined by Smith and Marvin Williams on Atlanta's front line. Drew wanted the Hawks to use their running game to beat the Lakers.

"We tried to put a lot of emphasis on playing up-tempo, and it seemed like we ran out of gas," Drew said.

After leading 57-49 at halftime, the Lakers scored the first six points of the second half and stretched their lead to 22 points at 79-57 late in the third period. Smith had a three-point play in a 9-0 run for Atlanta to cut the lead to 90-82.

The Lakers answered with an 8-0 run, including Bryant's 3-pointer with 3:22 remaining.

Lakers fans chanted "MVP! MVP!" as Bryant made two free throws with 1:02 remaining. The free throws gave Los Angeles a 100-84 lead. Lakers coach Phil Jackson stuck with most of his starters for the final minute.

"It was a good performance, but after the game the mood was 'Let's get on to the next game,'" Jackson said.

Los Angeles had five players in double figures before the end of the third period.

Trail Blazers 105, Heat 96

In Miami, LaMarcus Aldridge showed why he should have been an All-Star selection by shooting 26 points to lead Portland over out-of-form Miami.

Gerald Wallace scored 22 for Portland, which won its seventh straight on the road.

Dwyane Wade scored 38 points and LeBron James added 31 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists for the Heat, who have lost five in a row.

Suns 113, Rockets 110

In Phoenix, Hakim Warrick scored a career-high 32 points starting in place of injured Channing Frye as Phoenix added to its recent dominance of Houston.

Vince Carter scored 15 of his 32 points in the fourth quarter, including two of his five 3-pointers, in the Suns' seventh consecutive victory over Houston.

Kevin Lowry scored 32 points, including a career-high seven 3-pointers, for the Rockets, who had won seven of eight overall and seven of eight road games entering the contest.

The Suns never led by more than six in the game and trailed by 11 before recovering.

A rare free throw miss by Steve Nash gave the Rockets a chance to tie it at the finish, but Brad Miller's 3-point try under pressure was far off the mark at the buzzer.

76ers 110, Pacers 100

In Indianapolis, Philadelphia made it seven wins from eight games by downing Indiana.

Thaddeus Young scored 18 points and Andre Iguodala, coming off back-to-back triple-doubles, finished with 16 points and 10 assists for the 76ers.

Tyler Hansbrough's 26 points led the Pacers, who have lost four straight. They started off 7-1 under interim coach Frank Vogel, but have struggled to defend since.

Philadelphia shot 51 percent and forced Indiana into 20 turnovers. All five 76ers starters scored at least 12 points.

Bucks 95, Wizards 76

In Washington, Brandon Jennings scored 23 points to lead Milwaukee over Washington.

Jennings scored 10 points in the third quarter to help the Bucks to a 23 point lead at the last break.

Andrew Bogut had 14 points, nine rebounds and seven assists in his first game back from three games out with a muscle strain near his ribs. He played 33 minutes and scored six straight points for Milwaukee midway through the second quarter.

Rookie Jordan Crawford had a career-high 22 points for the Wizards, who have lost nine of their past 10.

Warriors 95, Cavaliers 85

In Cleveland, Monta Ellis made a career-high six 3-pointers—all in the second half—and scored 24 points to spark Golden State to victory over Cleveland.

Ellis made all 5 of his 3-point attempts and scored 17 in the third quarter.

Stephen Curry added 23 points for the Warriors.

Baron Davis scored 19 in his second home game for the Cavs, who were powerless to stop Ellis once he warmed up from outside.

NBA *mulling formal concussion policy*

MILWAUKEE (AP)—The NBA is consulting with an independent neurologist and may establish a league-wide policy for handling concussions by next season, The Associated Press has learned.

NBA spokesman Tim Frank confirmed the discussions Tuesday.

"The NBA Team Physicians Society has been studying the issue of concussion management for several years and each team follows its own treatment and return-to-play protocols," he said. "In addition, the league is working with a consulting neurologist concerning the possible adoption of a league-wide protocol."

The move would bring the NBA more in line with both the NHL and the NFL. In just the last four weeks, six NBA players have missed games because of concussions or concussion-like symptoms.

Most recently, New Orleans point guard Chris Paul was taken off the floor on a stretcher on Sunday night after diving and hitting his forehead on Cleveland guard Ramon Sessions' right shoulder. He was diagnosed with a concussion.

"Concussions are something that I don't think we really realize how serious they are because they're kind of rare in our game. They happen more often in football, hockey, other sports like that," said Bucks guard Keyon Dooling, a vice president of the NBA players' union executive committee along with Paul.

"Our brain is our most powerful muscle, and if you've got anything off-kilter with that, it can be problematic," Dooling said recently.

The NBA and the players' union say they are tracking the number of head hits. Frank declined to name the neurologist involved with the league, but said they've been working on the issue extensively this season.

Basketball doesn't draw the same level of concern as in other sports such as hockey and football because there aren't as many violent head hits and fewer concussions.

"They seem to be really rare, but I did have one as a player," Pistons president Joe Dumars said. "I can't recall any of our guys over the years getting a concussion, but if it was to come up, we would absolutely exercise caution."

Hornets coach Monty Williams is dealing with Paul's injury after two of his own as a player while Clippers coach Vinny Del Negro believes the league has to balance player safety with how the game is played.

"They're trying to do different things with rules in terms of respect of the game and flagrant fouls and things to protect guys," Del Negro said. "There's a fine line there. The game is an instinct game. You want to react.

"There's going to be physical contact, it's part of it. There's going to be collisions in the air and depending on how guys land and how vicious they are, you want to protect that."

Players on Tuesday night said they would embrace a league-wide initiative in the interest of their safety.

"Whatever they implement, I'm all for it," Sixers forward Elton Brand said. "Guys want to play as much as we can in this league. We might not know the hazards and problems that can come with something like that."

While the league has been working on policy, including a lengthy medical meeting during the All-Star break, Atlanta's Al Horford believes Paul's injury will have a bigger effect on players' views of concussions now.

"That opened a lot of people's eyes," he said.

NFL offers more financial info; union deciding

WASHINGTON (AP)—The NFL Players Association retained an international investment bank to help it decide whether the league's offer to reveal more financial information during negotiations will be enough to satisfy the union's call for full disclosure.

Zeroing in on the crux of the labor dispute—how to split $9 billion in revenues—one NFLPA executive committee member, Cleveland Browns linebacker Scott Fujita, said in a telephone interview Tuesday with The Associated Press and NFL Network that what the NFL has turned over to the union so far "hasn't been sufficient.

Another executive committee member, Indianapolis Colts center Jeff Saturday, said as he left Tuesday's 9 1/2-hour mediation session that the bank would "help judge how helpful the material they were offering to give us" would be.

The current collective bargaining agreement was set to expire last week, but two extensions now have pushed the cutoff to the end of Friday.

While progress has been made, both sides have stuck to their stances when it comes to two central issues: The NFLPA has not agreed to any major economic concessions; the NFL has not agreed to the union's long-held demand that the league completely open its books, repeatedly saying the players have enough data.

One key question is what cut team owners should get up front to help cover costs such as stadium construction and improvement. Under the old deal, owners received more than $1 billion off the top. They entered these negotiations seeking to add another $1 billion to that amount, before other revenues are divided with players.

Although there might have been some movement in that area, the union says it is not enough.

"We're being asked to give back almost a billion dollars, so it's important for us to adequately analyze and interpret the little bit of information that's been provided," said Fujita, who attended negotiations last month but not this week. "And ultimately, if they're unwilling to provide full audited statements, then we need to know what other information we need to make a sound decision."

Asked whether having full financial transparency from the league is a deal-breaker, NFLPA assistant executive director for external affairs George Atallah replied: "In the face of an almost billion-dollar ask? Yes."

Atallah would not identify the investment bank, which he said has been advising the union for a "couple of months."

The NFL's lead labor negotiator, Jeff Pash, said the bank has not contacted the league.

"We feel like we've given a lot of financial information. And we understand they may have a different view," Pash said. "But I'm not going to get into what we discussed with them this week."

He was part an NFL group Tuesday that included Commissioner Roger Goodell, New York Giants owner John Mara, Kansas City Chiefs owner Clark Hunt, Atlanta Falcons president Rich McKay—chairman of the league's competition committee—and Washington Redskins general manager Bruce Allen.

The NFLPA contingent included executive director DeMaurice Smith, president Kevin Mawae and several current or former players, including Cardinals kicker Jay Feely, Chiefs linebacker Mike Vrabel and Ravens cornerback Domonique Foxworth.

Top NFLPA outside counsel Jeffrey Kessler wasn't present Monday or Tuesday.

When Smith exited after the longest of the 13 days of mediation since it began Feb. 18, he was asked why the union brought aboard the investment bank.

"Look, this is a $9 billion business, and the players are—and have been—very involved in what we call the business of football," Smith said.

"Having the best and brightest people in the world advising us on financial matters—that's just good business," he added.

If a deal isn't reached by Friday, the sides could agree to another extension. Or talks could break off, leading to, possibly, a lockout by owners or antitrust lawsuits by players.

The NFL has not lost games to a work stoppage in nearly a quarter-century. By agreeing to continue with mediation, the league and union made it clear neither was quite ready to make the drastic move of shutting down a sport that is more popular than ever. The past two Super Bowls rank No. 1 and No. 2 among most-watched TV programs in U.S. history.

Fujita said he's "hopeful" a deal can be reached by Friday, but he also noted: "'Hope'—I don't know if that means anything."

Either way, he considers it imperative that the players know more about the owners' financial records.

"What they've provided so far hasn't been sufficient. Asking for almost a billion dollars back—that's a huge, huge leap of faith. And that's kind of what it's been so far—them asking us to take a leap of faith," Fujita said. "And we can't do that without sound judgment."

Ohio St suspends Tressel 2 games for violation

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)—Ohio State football coach Jim Tressel received an e-mail last April telling him that two of his players were caught up in a federal drug-trafficking case and the sale of memorabilia, breaking NCAA rules.

Tressel responded: "I will get on it ASAP."

But he never mentioned it to Ohio State's compliance department or his athletic director for more than nine months.

On Tuesday, Tressel was suspended for the first two games of the 2011 season and fined $250,000 for violating NCAA rules by failing to notify the school about the players' involvement. He also will receive a public reprimand and must make a public apology.

The NCAA is still investigating and could reject Ohio State's self-imposed penalties and add more sanctions.

"Obviously I'm disappointed that this happened at all," Tressel said. "I take my responsibility for what we do at Ohio State tremendously seriously and for the game of football. I plan to grow from this. I'm sincerely saddened by the fact that I let some people down and didn't do things as well as I possibly could have."

Last December, the NCAA suspended quarterback Terrelle Pryor and four teammates for the first five games on the 2011 season for selling jerseys, championship rings and trophies to a local tattoo parlor owner. The suspensions came just 16 days after the U.S. attorney told the school of a federal investigation that included players.

The school did not learn until January, however, that Tressel had been tipped off to the federal investigation back in April.

AP

Ohio State coach Jim Tressel talks with members of the media during an NCAA college football news conference, Tuesday, March 8, 2011, in Columbus, Ohio.

Yahoo! Sports first reported Tressel's prior knowledge of the possible improper benefits on Monday.

"I think that your No. 1 critic is yourself," he said, tears welling in his eyes at a Tuesday night news conference. "You spend time thinking about how you can do things better. I don't think less of myself at this moment. I felt at the time as if I was doing the right thing for the safety of the young people and the overall situation."

Asked when he first realized that he had violated NCAA rules, Tressel blinked, faltered and hesitated—momentarily speechless.

With Ohio State again being investigated by the NCAA, college football is digging out of yet another scandal. The 2010 season was weighed down from start to finish with NCAA issues, from North Carolina being investigated for players having improper contact with agents to the play-for-pay scheme involving Cam Newton's father that was uncovered in November.

Last week, Oregon announced the NCAA and Pac-10 was looking into the school's arrangement with a recruiting service.

The NCAA has faced criticism for going easy on rule-breakers, especially for letting Ohio State's guilty players participate in the Sugar Bowl and for not punishing Newton, the Auburn quarterback, for his father's misdeeds.

Tressel said he never thought of resigning, and Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith said he never seriously considered firing Tressel for violating his contract, which specifies that he must immediately report any—the word is underlined in the contract—information which pertains to violations of NCAA, Big Ten or Ohio State bylaws and rules.

"Wherever we end up, Jim Tressel is our football coach," Smith said. "He is our coach, and we trust him implicitly."

On April 2, 2010, Tressel received an e-mail from a person he identified only as "a lawyer," who wrote that Ohio State players had been implicated in activities with Eddie Rife, a local tattoo-parlor owner, whom the federal government was investigating on charges of drug-trafficking. The e-mail, released to reporters but with the names redacted, said players were selling signed Buckeyes memorabilia and giving it to Rife in exchange for money and tattoos.

Tressel said he allowed the two players cited in the e-mail to play the entire 2010 season because he did not want to "interfere with a federal investigation" and worried that sitting eligible players would raise a "whole new set of questions."

The Buckeyes coach said he was trying to protect his players by not breaking the confidentiality of the federal investigation.

"Admittedly, I probably did not give quite as much thought to the potential NCAA part of things," he said.

Along with Pryor, starting receiver DeVier Posey, leading rusher Dan "Boom" Herron, offensive lineman Mike Adams and backup defensive lineman Solomon Thomas were suspended for selling memorabilia, but allowed to play in the Sugar Bowl, which the Buckeyes won 31-26 against Arkansas.

Shortly after Ohio State returned from New Orleans, the university began reviewing its information on an unrelated legal issue, Smith said Tuesday, and Tressel acknowledged he had not told everything he knew about his players and their relationship with the tattoo parlor and its owner.

"I plan to grow from this," Tressel said. "I'm sincerely saddened by the fact that I let some people down and didn't do things as well as I possibly could have."

This was not the first time Tressel or his players have run into problems with the NCAA.

Ray Isaac, a star quarterback at Youngstown State, accepted improper inducements including cars. Tressel was found to have done an incomplete investigation of those allegations, with Youngstown State later serving penalties. In addition, Maurice Clarett, who led the Buckeyes to the 2002 national championship, and Troy Smith, winner of the 2006 Heisman Trophy, were suspended by the NCAA for receiving money and other benefits from boosters.

The Buckeyes open next season with games against Akron and Toledo, likely playing those without their coach and their star quarterback.

The team resumed workouts this week - with all of the suspended players participating, and with Tressel in the middle of practice with a whistle around his neck.

Phat Boyz get share of lead with Natibu

By WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

Budweiser CHAMOLINIAN SOFTBALL LEAGUE

Phat Boyz now share the top spot in the men's division of 2nd Annual Budweiser Slow-Pitch Softball League men's standings with Natibu (5-0) after downing Man Amigos, 7-4, in Monday's nightcap at the Capitol Hill Ballfield.

Phat Boyz is still flawless in five games in Chamolinian Softball Association-organized league, while Man Amigos' win-loss record fell to 3-2.

Red Eye, meanwhile, evened out its card to 3-3, by edging Calikano Groupers, 18-17, in Monday's first match.

Notably, the Groupers have suffered four tough losses in six games and as of late are dealing with a difficult schedule of opponents; four of their opponents are .500 teams or better and all of their losses have been close calls.

In women's play, Enamo Meta improved its record to 4-1 and issued Check It Out its fourth loss in five games. Two of Check It Out's losses, however, were via forfeit.

WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND

Phat Boyz's Byron Kaipat gets ready to unload on a grand slam against Man Amigos in their 2nd Annual Budweiser Slow-Pitch Softball League matchup Monday night at the Capitol Hill Ballfield.

Phat Boyz 7, Man Amigos 4

After both teams went 1-2-3 in the first frame, Man Amigos took an early 1-0 lead in the bottom of the second off an RBI rip by Julian Camacho.

After a scoreless second and third, Phat Boyz pulled ahead 4-1 in the top of the fourth inning. They loaded the bases with a hit and a pair of walks that set up a grand slam by Byron Kaipat.

Man Amigos then answered with a three-run blast by Eric Palacios in the bottom of the fifth to pull within one, 3-4.

Phat Boyz answered with two runs in the top of the sixth off a pair of sacrifice flies by Toi Celis and Kyle Kaipat.

Man Amigos went 1-2-3 in the crucial bottom frame and Phat Boyz added an insurance run off a sacrifice fly by Jun Kaipat in the top of the seventh.

Man Amigos only managed a run off a solo shot by Jerry Ayuyu in its final stand and came up a little short in what was a more of a defensive matchup.

Notably, Phat Boyz committed zero errors, while Man Amigos' two double plays were thwarted by a handful of costly errors. Man Amigos actually out hit the Phat Boyz 8-6.

Red Eye 18, Calikano Groupers 17

After both teams scored three runs in the second frame, Calikano Groupers took an early 4-3 lead in the top of the third off an RBI rip by Navan Falig.

Red Eye then went ahead 7-4 in the bottom frame off a three-run homer by Jack Sablan and an RBI double by Abe Quitugua.

Groupers came back to reclaim the lead, 8-7, in top of the fourth off a pair of RBI knocks by Fred Pangelinan and Mike Cruz and a two-RBI double by Jess Magofna. Red Eye, however, tied it back up at 8-all off a sacrifice fly in the bottom frame.

Groupers went ahead 11-8 at the start of the fifth off a fielder's choice and a pair of RBI singles by Joe Sablan and Ben Falig, but Red Eye answered and shot ahead 16-11 in the bottom frame off eight hits and an error.

Groupers came up empty to start the sixth and Red Eye added two more runs off three hits and a double.

Groupers managed six runs in the top of the seventh, but Red Eye held on for the win.

Enamo Meta 16, Check It Out 6

Check It Out broke the ice with three runs off an error, an RBI triple by Didi Tudela, and a sacrifice fly by Vanessa Mobel, but ended the inning with the bases loaded.

Enamo Meta got two runs back in the bottom frame off an error and a base rip by Jovie Omar.

Check It Out then went ahead 5-2 in the top of the second off a two-RBI double by Tudela, but Enamo Meta jumped ahead 7-5 in the bottom frame off a pair of RBI singles by Beatrice Kaainoa and Nami Tadokoro, a two-RBI double by Hermina Kelley, and an error.

Check It Out went 1-2-3 to start the third and Enamo Meta added six more runs in the bottom frame off errors and a pair of RBI base hits by Kelley and Todokoro.

Check It Out came up empty in the top of the fourth and Enamo Meta went ahead 15-5 in the bottom frame off errors and an RBI rip by Kaainoa.

Check It Out managed a run in the top of the fifth, but Enamo Meta matched it in the bottom frame for the run-rule decision.

Softball action continues tomorrow night with men's pairing featuring V-Power (4-1) against Salty's (3-2), followed by women's league play at 7:30pm between Proa (2-2) and frontrunner Sakudi (4-0). Then another 8:30pm men's matchup between team Laolao Bay (1-3) and Berdax (1-2) concludes the evening.

TOUGH

From Page

for an unprecedented seventh title in a row against U.S. pros Shonny Vanlandingham and Suzie Snyder, Austria's Carina Wasle, United Kingdom's Daz Parker, and Saipan's very own Mieko Carey.

"I know it will be hard to defend my title this time, as the season has just started, but I will do my best," said Bucher, who competed in the inaugural XTERRA Philippines last Sunday in Cebu City for her first race of the year.

Bucher, who failed to complete last year's XTERRA World after a bike crash, finished second behind Vanlandingham in XTERRA Philippines, with less than two minutes separating the two pros.

"It was so hot there unlike here where there's a breeze. I hope I warmed up enough in the Philippines to get ready for XTERRA Saipan. I am also keeping my fingers crossed that I will not have a crash," added Bucher, who in the last six years in XTERRA Saipan had never suffered a bad crash.

"The Saipan course has been very good to me," the Swiss said.

Elusive first win

"I hope this is my year," Vanlandingham said when asked about her chances in the race.

Vanlandingham finished second to Bucher in last year's XTERRA, falling behind the Swiss bet by about nine minutes. In 2009, during her debut in XTERRA's Crown Jewel, the U.S. pro finished third behind Bucher and U.K. pro Julie Dibens.

"Though it's still early in the season, I believe I am fitter this year than last and the race in the Philippines boosted my confidence a bit. However, I should not be overconfident and take anybody for granted. Each competitor has her own strengths. Renata is super strong, as she is getting faster in the swim race and steady in the run leg. I have the advantage in the bike race so I will try to gain momentum in this part," Vanlandingham said.

The defending XTERRA World champion was a mountain bike champion first before switching to triathlon three years ago.

"Then there is Carina, who has been in good condition and a very good runner and uphill biker. Another U.S. pro [Snyder] is also here and did a great job in XTERRA World and you have Mieko [Carey] who knows her way here," Vanlandingham said.

"Obviously, it's an open race. I may have beaten Renata and Carina in XTERRA Philippines, but Saipan is a different course and you'll never know what's going to happen out there," the former collegiate basketball player added.

High expectations

Wasle will be debuting in XTERRA Saipan and she is setting her sights on no less than a first place finish in the women's division.

"I want to win, but it will not be easy going up against Renata, Shonny, and Suzie. I hope my experience in uphill running and biking will give me the edge," said Wasle, who also does cross country skiing and mountain running.

"The weather will be a great challenge, as I am not used to running in heat. But, I had been to XTERRA Philippines and sort of had a feeling how to race in this tough weather," added Wasle, who will be the most conditioned among the women's pros, as she also joined XTERRA South Africa last month.

The Austrian finished first in XTERRA South Africa, beating four other South African pros. Wasle timed in at 2:41:47 and won by more than three minutes over Michelle Lombardi (2:44:59). It was her second XTERRA South Africa win in three years, having topped the event in 2009. The victory in South Africa gave the Austrian her seventh XTERRA win, as she ruled XTERRA Germany three times and XTERRA Czech Republic twice. In XTERRA Philippines, Wasle placed third, less than three minutes behind Vanlandingham.

Wasle, who joined local triathletes in a practice swim at the "Tanks" in Susupe yesterday and checked on bike course on Tuesday, said despite doing two long races in less than a month, she still has enough juice left to have a winning debut in XTERRA Saipan.

LADY

From Page

rally when she made a banked shot—the Lady Geckos' first field goal in the fourth period—and lifted SIS to a 16-9 advantage, 3:08 left on the clock.

A split free throw from Demapan and two charities from Rayphand in the ensuing plays kept GCA's hopes alive, 12-16. However, time was not on the Lady Eagles' side, as precious seconds from the clock were wasted with teams trading errors before SIS' Seoung Hyun Lee went 1-for-2 from the foul line and later nailed a layup off a hustle play to peg the final score.

The Lady Eagles and Lady Geckos played a helter-skelter ballgame with the former on the losing end of erratic plays, as GCA failed to score a single field goal in the first three quarters. The Lady Eagles were scoreless in the first and third periods and only made it to the scoreboard at the 1:51 mark of the second canto off Jenny Lee's pair of free throws.

The Lady Geckos were a bit lucky in the scramble plays, as Frink and Adele Hudkins were at the right place and right time to pick up offensive boards and loose balls and canned inside baskets. Hudkins and Frink each tallied six points, while Emily Jones added four. Lee contributed three markers for SIS.

Rayphand led GCA with five points, Demapan had four, and Canedo and Lee scored two apiece.

Meanwhile, after the SIS-Whispering Palms girls finals, GCA will battle SIS at 4:30pm for the boys junior varsity crown.

SIS 19 – Hudkins 6, Frink 6, Jones 4, Lee 3.

GCA 13 – Rayphand 5, Demapan 4, Canedo 2, Lee 2.

Scoring by quarters: 4-0, 10-2, 14-2, 19-13.

ROP 10

From Page

ROP 10 marks Trench Tech's first mixed martial arts event of the year and features fighters from the United States, Guam, Saipan, and Tinian.

ROP 10's triple main event features a Guam versus Saipan welterweight main event bout between Trench Tech Jason Tarkong (9-2) and undefeated T.J. Cruz (2-0) of Guam's Kisetsu Warriors.

It will be preceded by a U.S. versus Saipan super fight featuring USA's Will "The Kill" Chope (1-1) squaring off against Fasi "Quick Draw" Jesse in a lightweight battle. Chope stands 6'4" and trains under the Dragon Muay Tai fight team in Orange Park, Florida.

Before the USA versus Saipan super fight, a juicy rematch between featherweights Derrick "El Peligro" Rangamar (4-8), of Marianas Elite, and Trench Tech's Chris "No Luv" Laayug (6-1) will also go down. Layuug beat Rangamar the first time they met at ROP 5: Raging Warriors in 2008, however Rangamar is coming off a couple of big wins from 2010.

Fourteen other MMA bouts, a grappling challenge, a K-1 kickboxing duel, and a pair of exhibition boxing matches are listed on the fight card.

Notably, ROP 10 will feature Trench Tech's first-ever youth boxing exhibition between P.J. "Lightning" Litulumar and Josenio "Little Bear" Alvarez; both are members of the Trench Tech family and are excited to showcase there skills n the ring.

Nine-year-old Litulumar hails from Chalan Laulau and is a third grader at Dandan Elementary School; his favorite subject is math. He has served as Alvarez's sparring partner for the past three months at the Trench Tech Gym.

Eight-year-old Alvarez is a second grader at Garapan Elementary School and his favorite subject is Chamorro Bilingual. Alvarez has been around the MMA scene for most of his life and already has two years of training under his belt.

Tickets cost $20 for all seats are on sale right now for Trench Tech's first MMA event of the year at Boarderline, 670 Rocksteady Shop, Hannam Super Market, Trapp Urban Boutique, and Trench Tech Gym in San Antonio and will be sold at the weigh-in; seating will be based on availability.

D-9ERS

From Page

of the fourth inning. Sakisat settled in quickly and forced a 1-2-3 inning in the top of the fifth and his team jumped ahead, 8-3, in the bottom frame off an RBI single by Robert Bansil and a couple of errors.

Sakisat went on to retire the next six Masters batters in a row, while his team tacked on the five runs needed to secure a run-rule decision in the bottom of the seventh inning off an error and RBI singles by Tenorio, Acosta, Chris Camacho, and Bansil.

One unearned run came in off winning pitcher Sakisat who allowed just one hit with three strikeouts. D-9ers' Tenorio batted 3-for-4 with three RBIs, two runs, and two stolen bases.

SML action continues tonight at Tan Ko Field with the Ol'Aces (0-2) taking on the Fielders (1-2) at 6:30pm.

2011 Saipan Marathon Winners

PHOTOS By
ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Winners in the 10K run pose for a group photo during the awards ceremony for the 2011 Saipan Marathon at the American Memorial Park last Saturday.

Full marathon age group winners pose for a group photo.

Half marathon age group winners celebrate at the make-shift stage after receiving medals.

The Top 6 men's and women's open finishers in the half marathon pose for a group photo.

The Top 6 men's and women's open finishers in the 10K race show their trophies and medals.

Men's half marathon top finisher Michael Gaitan of Guam, center, listens to the questions of the two Japanese hosts.

Marathon champions Satoshi Emoto, left, and Noriko Hirao show their trophies.

Mamiko Oshima-Berger receives hi-five from Japanese guests before getting her runner-up trophy in the full marathon.

Top women finisher (10K) Noriko Jim of Saipan answers the question of one of the Japanese hosts during the awards ceremony.

Bryant, streaking Lakers drop Hawks, 101-87

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Sports

Ohio St suspends Tressel 2 games for violation

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Tough women's field in XTERRA

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Pros competing in the women's division of the 2011 XTERRA Saipan Championship believe this Saturday's off-road triathlon is anybody's race.

"You'll never know who is going to win. It's a tough field," six-time and defending XTERRA Saipan champion Renata Bucher said in an interview with *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

Bucher will be defending her title and gunning

See TOUGH on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
From left, Taga, Inc. president Wolf Mojica, Shonny Vanlandingham, Renata Bucher, and Bill Sakovich pose for a group photo in Susupe yesterday after meeting with local triathletes.

Lady Geckos enter JV finals

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Saipan International School's Adele Hudkins pulls up for a one-hander against two Grace Christian Academy defenders during their semis game in the COPSSA caging yesterday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Saipan International School booked the second and last finals ticket in the 2010-2011 Coalition of Private Schools Sports Association Basketball League after thwarting Grace Christian Academy in their semifinals game, 19-13, yesterday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The Lady Geckos will duel pennant champion and league top seed Whispering Palms for the girls junior varsity crown today at 3:30pm at the Ada Gym. Whispering Palms advanced to the finals after downing Seventh Day Adventist, 32-20, in the first semifinals game last Friday.

In the second semis match between SIS and GCA, the Lady Geckos, survived the Lady Eagles' fourth-quarter rally for a six-point win.

SIS led, 14-2, after three periods, but GCA quickly converted back-to-back baskets in the opening minutes of the fourth canto to make it an interesting game. Jazmin Rayphand made an undergoal stab, while Danica Canedo had a putback, moving the Eagles within eight, 6-14.

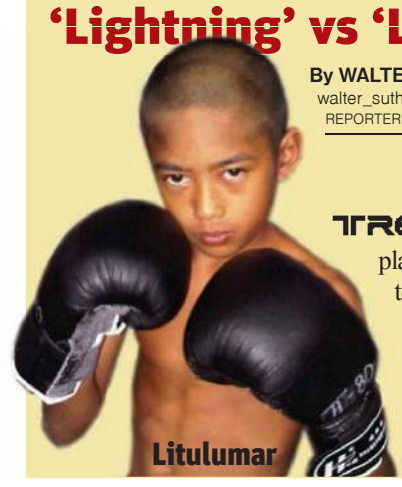
After teams traded misses and errors, Zena Demapan drilled another inside basket, drew a foul, and completed the three-point play, slicing the Lady Geckos' lead to five, 9-14.

Phalai Frink then halted GCA's

See LADY on Page 26

ROP 10: Bad Intentions weigh-ins tonight

'Lightning' vs 'Little Bear' in youth boxing exhibition



Litulumar

By WALTER SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

Weigh-ins for Trench Tech Purebred Promotions' Rites of Passage 10: Bad Intentions takes place at The Flair Bar in Garapan tonight from 4:30pm to 6:30pm.

Attendance is mandatory for all fighters, team managers, and corner men. ROP 10 goes down Friday night at the Saipan World Resort; doors open at 7pm and fights start at 9pm.

See ROP 10 on Page 26

Alvarez

WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND
The D-9ers pose for a team photo after defeating the Masters, 13-3, in seven innings in last Tuesday's Saipan Major League matchup at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

D-9ers rout Masters, 13-3

By WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

The D-9ers pummeled the Masters, 13-3, in seven innings in last Tuesday's Saipan Major League matchup at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

It was the second win in three games for D-9ers, while the Masters have lost three out of four.

Masters broke the ice with a run off an error in the top of the second, but D-9ers answered with four runs in the bottom frame off a two-RBI single by Jonathan Tenorio, an RBI knock by John Acosta, and a fielder's choice.

The Masters managed another run off an RBI single by Kelvin Diaz in the top of the third, but D-9ers got it back in the bottom frame off another RBI rip by Tenorio.

Then the Masters mustered a run in the next frame off an error and forced a D-9ers 1-2-3 inning in the bottom half to trail, 3-5, after four innings.

D-9ers' Mel Sakisat came in to relieve Jared Camacho at the start

See D-9ERS on Page 26